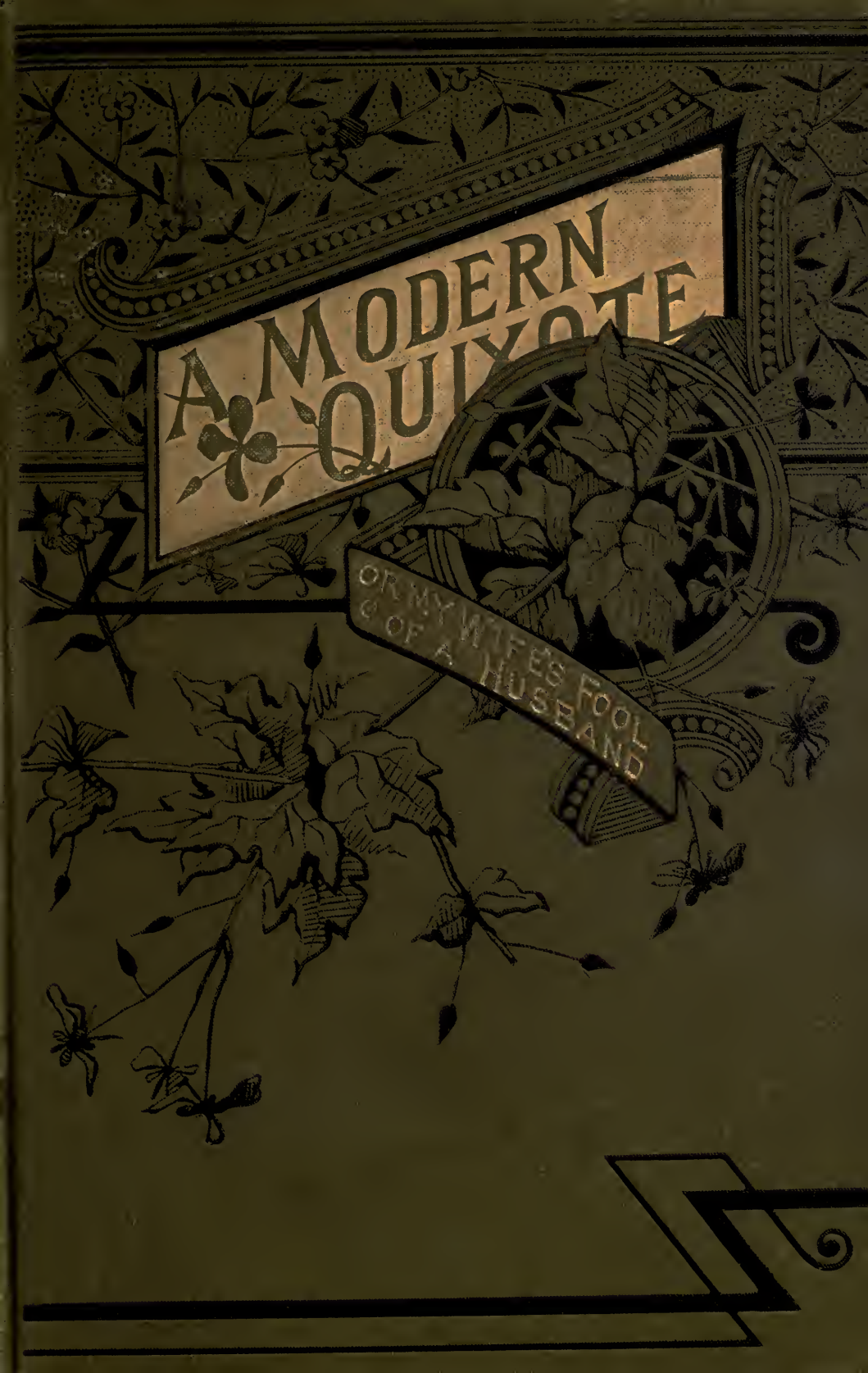
A MODERN
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OR MY WIFE'S FOOL
OF A HUSBAND

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AUGUSTA AND I.

A MODERN QUIXOTE,

OR

MY WIFE'S FOOL OF A HUSBAND.

BY

AUGUST BERKELEY,

(Past Editor of the old "The Farmer's Guide,")

AUTHOR OF "OUTWITTED AT LAST," "THE MISSING LINK,"

"NEVER TELL BOYS," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TRUE WILLIAMS.

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TO MY

AFFECTIONATE WIFE,

WHO HAS BUT ONE FAULT—THAT OF BEING TOO GOOD FOR HER HUSBAND—THIS BOOK IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

634313

INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR'S WIFE.

AFTER my husband's return from his long stay in Massachusetts, it became my one great desire to keep him at home for the rest of his life; and for this purpose I suggested his writing a book, his autobiography.

In complying with my request, he made me promise that, if I was alive when his work was completed, I would write the preface. I never should have agreed to this, had I thought he would finish the task during my natural life; but, after working day and night with his usual energy, he has brought the work to a close in an astonishingly brief period.

If the rest of the world becomes half as enthusiastic over the reading as he has been over the writing, there will not be enough printing-presses in existence to supply the demand. However, since I have reviewed his production, I am bound to confess that his enthusiasm is not altogether misplaced.

I am very, very proud of him, notwithstanding he has written some things which I sincerely wish had been left out.

His pen-and-ink treatment of myself is doubtless sincere—would that I could say truthful—but I fear his affectionate heart has, in some instances, blinded his more critical judgment toward my numerous short-comings. I have felt it my duty to erase a few hundred of the endearing terms he had generously applied to me, realizing that, while I myself enjoy them so exceedingly in our private life, the disinterested public might fail to appreciate them.

I feel that he has not done full justice to his own character, for he has selected for publication many of the most ridiculous episodes, though doubtless they appear to him, and perhaps may be considered by the reader, to have been exceedingly trying events in his career. I am certain that if I were to publish what might be said concerning Mr. Berkeley, it would take a larger volume than his to hold the words that should depict the other side of his life. But, in making the selection of these peculiar experiences, Mr. Berkeley has had an object, namely: to teach the great lesson that *impulsiveness* is a terrible foe, which, if allowed its sway, is liable to lead one into all manner of excesses and difficulties.

I will not undertake to apologize for this very inadequate preface, for probably the book which my husband now offers to his numerous friends will so completely usurp their attention that no person will ever know whether this, my small contribution to the work, is good or bad. Nor do I wish, even if it were in my power, to detract one moment's attention from the worthy man whom I greatly honor for his brilliant success, and whom I love with my whole heart's affection, and shall ever thus love.

MRS. AUGUSTA BERKELEY.

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PART I.

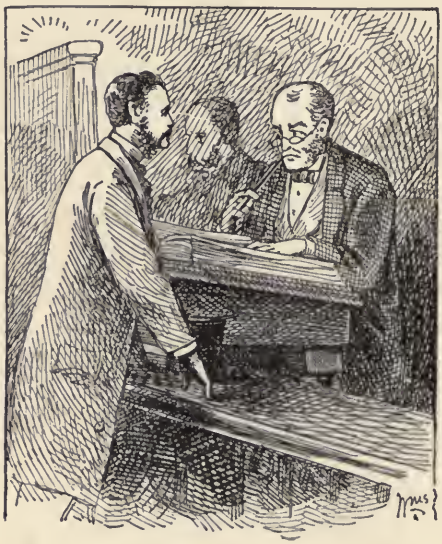
CHAPTER I.

A WEDDING EXPERIENCE.

I WAS to be married on the first day of May. The place was Chicago. The clergyman whom I had engaged to officiate explained to me that, by the laws of the State, it would be necessary for me to go before the Clerk of the County Court, answer certain questions, and procure a marriage license. To impress this important fact on my memory, he was good enough to tell me several amusing anecdotes concerning parties who had made great preparations for a grand wedding, only to discover at the last moment, when all the company were on the *qui vive*, that the license had been forgotten.

Many of my friends, knowing my proclivity to forget everything, kindly took it upon themselves to jog my memory repeatedly about the license. Each one had known somebody who had drifted into a ridiculous dilemma because that essential document had been forgotten. One bride had been so indignant at the groom's negligence, that, when told that her marriage must be postponed, she backed down and out completely, and finally married somebody else. Another was so chagrined because the whole congregation laughed in her face when she turned to leave the church—still in a condition of aged singleness—that she went home and committed suicide.

These sad and truthful accounts so impressed themselves upon my mind that I hastened to the Court-house four weeks before the marriage day, and became the proud possessor of a veritable official permission to have and to hold forever, if need be, Augusta Brownlow—said blessed privilege to take effect the moment any proper authority should pronounce us husband and wife.



GETTING A LICENSE.

Without any unnecessary delay, I carried the license to my minister and requested him to keep it for me till it was wanted. With this simple request he refused to comply. He was a man of unyielding method, and his method was to have the license handed to him by the groom immediately preceding the ceremony. He wanted to flourish it before the assembly, and to recite, in his solemn, pompous style, "I hold in my hand an instrument sanctioned by the State and legalized by the great seal of the court, by which I am authorized, etc., etc."

On his refusal to take charge of the license—for which I have never forgiven him—I hurried away, resolved to trust it to Augusta's care, for I knew well enough I should lose it if I undertook to keep it myself. I lose everything. From Augusta it received a cordial reception. So did I.

My friends still continued to warn me not to forget the license. Toward the last, the question "Have you got your license?" became very monotonous, and I was never so tired of any subject in my life. Those who had never asked it before asked it now; and those who had already asked it a dozen times, asked it again.

The hour arrived. The carriages that were to take us to the church were in waiting at the door. The groomsmen were ready, the bridesmaids were ready, the bride herself was ready and so was I, with the exception of putting on my new wedding-boots.

IMPORTUNITY.

At this point in the proceedings four or five persons were simultaneously possessed of the same inquiry, namely: "Have you got the license?"

"Do not be alarmed," answered my precious intended, "There is little danger of my neglecting that." So saying, she came forward, and with her own hands put the document into the breast pocket of my wedding coat, where it would be easy of access at the time required.

I was then left alone for a few minutes to struggle with my new boots, which, being a size too small for my feet, went on vexatiously hard.

Before I had fairly settled down to the task, a servant girl handed me a letter, which, as I soon discovered, con-

tained the bill for a box of cigars. I had bought them a week previous and had forgotten that they were not paid for.

"What shall I tell the messenger?" inquired the girl, as I resumed work on my boots. "He is at the door waiting for the money."

"Tell him to go and hang himself!" I replied petulantly.

To be dunned while putting on a tight boot is enough to irritate the ripest saint living. The more I thought of it, the more excited I became. I ought not to have thought of it at all, for as will appear in the sequel, there were other matters to which I should have given more careful attention.

IRRITATED.

"It is time to go," said Augusta, speaking in the same low, calm, musical tone which had always made her voice so charming to my ears.

"Yes, my dear," I replied, "the boots are on at last. Don't they look nice? I rounded the toes. The man who made them told me it would improve their appearance."

Augusta had no idea what I meant, nor did she at that moment, particularly care.

When we arrived at the church, it was filled to overflowing with the *elite* of the city—or rather of that part of it in which Augusta and I had lived, moved, and had our being.

I think I felt a little touch of pride as I marched up the broad aisle, leading one to whom others had vainly offered riches and honors—and who now was the cynosure of a thousand sparkling eyes.

However, if I allowed myself to be too much puffed up, my downfall was speedily approaching.

"I will now receive the license," said the minister in a loud, clear voice, as we arranged ourselves in front of the altars.—"What does this mean!" he exclaimed, in a lower tone when he had taken the paper from the envelope which I presented him. "It appears to be an unpaid bill for a box of cigars."

A SURPRISE.

"A thousand pardons," said I suffused with blushes and shame. "Simply a mistake. I have the license right here." Thereupon I dove into the pocket where I supposed it was, only to be disappointed. I tried the other breast pocket, then the two other pockets of my coat, then the two side pockets of my pantaloons, then the hip pocket, and finally the vest pockets, even to my watch pocket. Afterwards I examined my pocket book, and opened my pocket diary. This accomplished, I began at the beginning and repeated the explorations in detail, amid the suppressed laughter of the congregation. Oh my, how the perspiration poured off of me!

My prolonged search, having met with no success, I gave the minister a most despairing look and said: "What shall I do?"

He had a heart of stone. "Nothing can be done," said he, "but to adjourn the meeting until you either find the old, or obtain a new license."

"Look here," said I, "Why can't you go on with your ceremony? You know I had the license. I offered it to you long ago."

"True, you did," he replied, "but I must have the license in order to return it according to law. Every thing must be done decently and in order."

So aggravating was his solemn manner of saying this, that I mentally resolved to do him some bodily harm at the first decent and orderly opportunity.

HAPPY THOUGHT.

Meanwhile Augusta had quietly dispatched a fleet-footed boy to see if the missing paper had not dropped out of my pocket while I had been laboring with my new boots.

Nothing could have served better than this unhappy affair to bring out the beautiful coloring of Augusta's disposition. So entirely self-possessed did she remain that the whole congregation were kept at ease. Not a frown escaped her brow, nor the slightest reproof her lips.

A reporter who was present—one of the kind who is all ears, from the top of his head down and out—made notes of the whisperings he overheard while we were waiting. "Isn't the bride charming!" was said by several. "Altogether too good for *him!*" was occasionally the reply.

"Oh, he's a tip-top good fellow," remarked the more thoughtful, "only he is such an unsophisticated, impulsive, absent-minded, forgetful blunder-head, that one never knows what scrape he will get into next."

DISAPPOINTMENT.

The boy who had been sent for the lost license returned, with the graphic report that "nobody couldn't find hide nor hair of it."

Just at this moment, there came to me one of those sudden flashes of recollection which are remarkable for nothing except that they never come till they get ready. Suddenly I turned to Augusta and said: "I see through it all! That miserable license is in the toe of one of my boots. The shoe-maker told me they would be a little long at first, and advised me to put a wad of paper, or something, into the toes of them. I suppose I must have thought I was using that dunning letter for that purpose."

"Step right up to the minister," said Augusta, "and ask him to excuse you while you go into the vestibule and take your boots off!"

Acting on this wise counsel, I forthwith made an explanation to the clergyman and withdrew.

Imagine my feelings as I went out alone, having to face the high tide of a great sea of upturned faces! How different it was from my coming in, when Augusta was upon my arm and we were escorted by a brilliant retinue of grooms and maids!

It was a dreadful moment, and I got out of the church as quickly as I could.

Reaching the vestibule, of course there was no chair to be had, so I sat down on the floor and began tugging at my boot. Do you think I could stir it a peg? Indeed, I could not. My feet had been swelling ever since I put the boots on. In fact, I had been so hot and excited that I was swollen all over.

Pretty soon one of the ushers came out: "What in the world are you doing?" said he.

"Hold your tongue," said I, "or you will have the whole congregation out here. Lay hold of that boot and pull for dear life!"

He did as he was told, but he might as well have tried to pull up a liberty pole by the roots.

"You don't pull right," said I. "Don't you see you are pulling *me* instead of the boot. A few more jerks like that last one and off comes my leg."

Then the wretch laughed till he could not pull at all. Another usher came out. I set him at work on the other

IN THE VESTIBULE.

boot, for I was not quite certain which one contained the license.

"Hold! Hold!" cried I, when they had both seized my lower extremities. "You'll spoil my wedding clothes dragging me all over the dirty floor."

Two other men were sent for to take me by the shoulders and hold me back.

Then the report got started and spread though the congregation like wild-fire that I had fainted dead away, and many believed that I had retired for that purpose. This brought several ladies with their fans and smelling salts, post-haste into the vestibule.

Those who came first spoke hopefully. They said the blood was returning to my face nicely. They told the others to stand back so that I could get more fresh air; but they themselves never budged an inch, and not a breath of fresh air did I get.

Meanwhile one of the ushers had dispatched the fleet-footed boy to borrow a boot-jack. Unfortunately, however, the usher, in his haste, had abbreviated the order to "Jack." In due time, the boy returned with one of those house-lifting screws, which goes by that name. Why he didn't get a four-legged jack, and done with it, which would have been more to the purpose, is what surprises me.

JACK.

As the ladies became more numerous, more sociable and sympathetic, I grew smaller and smaller—at least I felt so—which may explain how it happened that one of my boots finally loosened its grip and suffered itself to be removed from my long-suffering foot.

Contrary to my usual run of luck it proved to be just the boot we wanted. The sorry-looking license was brought to light.

But my troubles were not at an end. In trying to get my boot on again, so great was the strain upon my wedding-

coat that it parted in the back revealing a gap about twelve inches in length.

A PRETTY COAT.

I begged the ladies to go into the church and be seated.

They went.

I was so overcome with indignation that I stepped to the door and hurled the offending boot into the street.

"Now," said I, "who will lend me one." Just here a new difficulty arose. It was the opinion of good judges that there was not a boot in the congregation large enough to fit me.

It so happened that just at that moment a policeman was passing. Who says the police are always absent when they are wanted? I called him in and briefly explained the situation. He was very kind. He said he had never stood up at a wedding himself, but he should be proud to have one of his boots stand up at one. With a slight turn of his ankle he kicked off the leather which encompassed his foot and bade me climb into it. I don't know anything about the numbering of boots, but if that was not a number fifteen there never was one.

INDIGNATION.

As I marched into church with it on, it seemed to come wabbling in after me as though

THE FINAL SCENE.

uncertain of its surroundings. It was never in such a place before. True to the instincts of its owner, however, it arrested — nothing in particular except everybody's attention.

How it takes the conceit out of a man not to be properly clothed! It is so of ideas. That was the trouble with our officiating clergyman in all his preaching. He would dress a tiny thought in such flowing robes of language—such immense phraseological boots that it would require two deacons to lead it.

However, we were married.

Thus endeth the first chapter.

CHAPTER II.

A TRAVELING EXPERIENCE.

AS soon as the wedding was over my wife and I took farewell leave of our Chicago friends, for we had resolved to make our home in New York City.

We got away without mishap, and nothing occurred to mar our pleasure till the train stopped at Zania, a good sized station on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern road.

Here I was awakened—it must have been about two o'clock in the morning—by loud, excited voices crying:

"Take him away!"

"Put up that knife!"

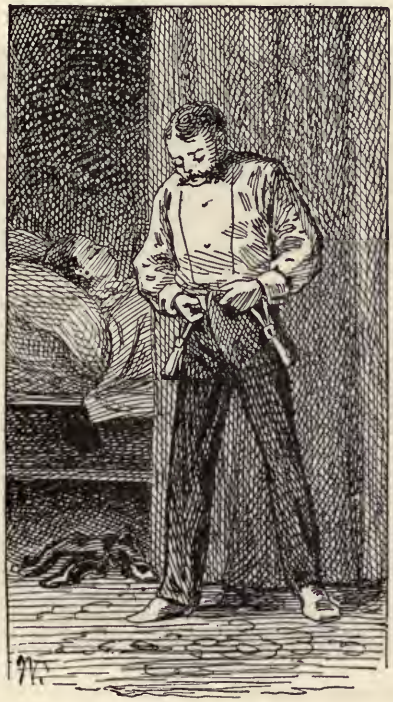
"Kill him!"

"Don't shoot!"

I immediately recognized the fact that a desperate fight was going on just outside our sleeping-car. Nothing could have interested me more. For many years I had been constantly employed in gathering items for a leading newspaper. It is scarcely to be supposed that a professional and experienced reporter can quietly turn over and go to sleep again after being roused by a murderous outcry.

I was determined to take in as much of that fight as possible, so I quickly pulled on that single outer garment which, strangely enough, we call "a pair," and without disturbing my slumbering beloved, hurried out of the car.

As nearly as I could learn, some track-layers employed by the railroad company had taken advantage of night-time to lay down rails and secure a new road just where the citizens did not want it. These separate interests had just met in violent conflict. Stones had been thrown; revolvers had been used; and, as a result, there were a few broken heads and considerable wasted blood on the battle-field. The conflict as now raging was mainly between the chiefs of the two parties, and each was bent on annihilating the other.



A HASTY TOILET.

As I stepped off the platform of the car an insanely excited young man brushed past me, exclaiming, "Where is he? Show him to me! I'll fix him!" And I knew he meant it, for I heard the click of his pistol as he cocked it ready for use.

It was but the work of a moment for me to seize his arm and relieve him of his deadly weapon; but no sooner had I accomplished the deed, than with the agility of a cat he turned and sprang upon me. Here was something I had not counted on. Never in my life had I been engaged in a hand-to-hand knockdown. My voice was still for peace. It may serve to give one a

little insight into my naturally pacific disposition, when I say that I allowed that fellow to hit me right and left at least seven times, although it did not take him long to do it before I got real mad. I never like to be thoroughly exasperated, because somehow it seems to have the effect to make me impulsive.

After a while I began to pay back the liberal capital he

TAKING A HAND.

had given me, and I added interest with no niggardly hand. I surprised myself. For an inexperienced athlete I had reason to be proud of my prowess. Of all the blows I aimed at my enemy only the last one failed to take effect, and this was owing to the interesting circumstance that just previously he had landed so far away that I could not reach him.

But my troubles were not ended. My vanquished opponent had friends. No sooner did they witness my victory than they pounced upon me from every direction. Now ensued a struggle that I will not undertake to describe. I fear I came out second best, but it was so dark, and I was so completely mixed up in the promiscuous crowd that I can not positively swear just how I did come out.

Suffice to say, when the scrimmage was over the train was gone. So was my sweetly sleeping wife. So was my coat and vest, hat and boots.

USELESS ARGUMENT.

What to do I did not know, and for a long time I kept on not knowing. Then it occurred to me to send a telegram to some station ahead of the train, to be delivered to my wife on its arrival, telling her to stop off and wait for me. Into the telegraph office I rushed and wrote a message accordingly. The operator would not receive it without having it paid for in advance. At this stage in the proceedings I was brought suddenly to the realization that I had not a cent of money in my possession. All the capital I had in the world was in my purse, and that was under the pillow in the berth of the sleeping-car.

Vainly did I plead with the operator to show me some favor in view of my misfortune. Vainly did I explain to

him how I had just saved a human being's life, and was therefore fairly entitled to some consideration. To all that I could say he returned the most surly answers. He even went so far as to express the wish that I would be compelled to continue my journey on foot, and that I might never succeed in overtaking my wife. I demanded an explanation. Then it came out that I had been fighting against the railroad men. What favor could I expect from the railroad in return? Why had not I stayed in the car and minded my business, instead of coming outside to lend sympathy and support to a set of prejudiced, hot-headed citizens, who, if they could have their way, would break up every railroad corporation in the country? As the tempestuous operator spat out these interrogatories I observed that his left eye was swelling. I knew then what was affecting his bile. He had been engaged in the late unpleasantness. I could almost recognize the prints of my knuckles on his face.

THE STATION AGENT.

I inquired for the ticket-agent. He also was wounded. Some of his comrades had just taken him home on a shutter. After considerable search I succeeded in finding the station-agent, but to my great disappointment he would neither lend

me a dollar nor provide me a place of shelter. His head was freshly bandaged and he was on his way to the drug-store. I waited for him to purchase a bottle of liniment and get away, when I entered the store, hoping to find some one who was not a railroad man. This hope was fully realized, for the night-clerk of that store turned out to be a perfect gentleman. I can never over-estimate the obligations to him under which his kindness placed me. No sooner had I told him my sad story than he enthusiastically commended the course I had pursued. The railroad company, he said, was bent on destroying the pride of Zania by cutting in two its beautiful park on which fronted the finest residences of the city. His own father had been engaged that very night in endeavoring to thwart the plans of the unholy monopoly.

I had no difficulty in borrowing money of my new friend. He furnished me also with coat and vest, and was anxious to add a pair of boots, but he did not happen to have any that he could spare. However, he brought me a pair of fur-topped overshoes, which I managed to get on.

Thus respectably garbed I returned to the telegraph office and succeeded in getting a message sent to my wife, which, as I thought was very nicely and clearly worded, but which, as the sequel will show, proved to be quite the reverse.

Meanwhile that lady awoke. At first she did not miss me. Why should she? To do her full justice, however, it must be confessed that she did experience an undefined impression, as she opened her eyes and looked around and extended her arms and felt about, that something—she could not quite recall what—was actually missing.

By chance her gaze fell upon two immense objects at the foot of the berth. She was thoroughly startled. At no

previous time in her life had she been suddenly called from dream-land to face such great, black, hideous things as she now beheld. They were my boots. No sooner had she recognized this fact than she began to wonder where I was. Without a moment's delay she thrust her head out between the curtains and examined the floor to see whether I had not fallen out of bed in my sleep. Then she began to worry. Her imagination conjured up a thousand calamities that had

SHE MISSED SOMETHING.

befallen me. For five minutes she almost ceased to breathe in listening for my returning footsteps. This painful suspense could be endured no longer. Hastily dressing herself, she began to search for me through the train. Meeting the conductor, she plied him with a perfect shower of questions. All that officer could say was that there had been a general row at Zania, and that he had seen a half-dressed passenger get off and engage in it, and had not seen him since.

This was anything but pleasant news to a young and

trusting wife; but, bless her good heart, she did not lose faith in me for a single second. When, at the next station, the conductor received my message she wept for joy.

THE TELEGRAM.

Tearing it from the envelope she read as follows:

"ZANIA, 3 A. M., May 2, 18—.

"To Mrs. Augusta Berkeley:

"MY DEAR: Take the next train without fail. Stop at Adrian. The money is under the pillow.

AUGUST BERKELEY."

What I had meant was that *I* should take the next train without delay and overtake her at Adrian.

What she understood was that she should get off at Adrian and there take returning train to Zania. As I now review all the circumstances of the case, I cannot see how she could

have come to any other conclusion. She supposed I was without money, hat, or boots; and moreover predicted that I was seriously wounded.

With what I had borrowed from the druggist's clerk I purchased a ticket and started for Adrian, about the time that Mrs. Berkeley was starting for Zania. Of course we

REUNITED.

met somewhere on the road, but were entirely innocent of that important circumstance.

Arriving at Adrian, and learning that my wife had gone to Zania I jumped aboard a lightning express train which was just that moment returning, and went back to Zania. Meantime—indeed, I thought it was a very mean time,—Mrs. Berkeley had left Zania and was returning to Adrian.

When I arrived at my destination and found I had made another blunder I resolved to wait where I was for my wife to come. When she arrived at her destination she resolved to wait where she was for my coming. Other mistakes occurred, but in spite of them all our blissful souls were reunited at the end of three days, and I promised my wife on my—fur-topped overshoes that I would never leave her again, fight or no fight, unless she was awake.

She was very proud of me, however, and gave me several hundred kisses for having saved three men's lives. (I told her it was three, and no doubt I was within the limit, for there was the man who would have been shot if I had not seized his mad pursuer and nearly annihilated him, and the pursuer himself who would have been hung for the murder, and the poor judge who would have presided at the trial and who undoubtedly would have died before it was ended.)

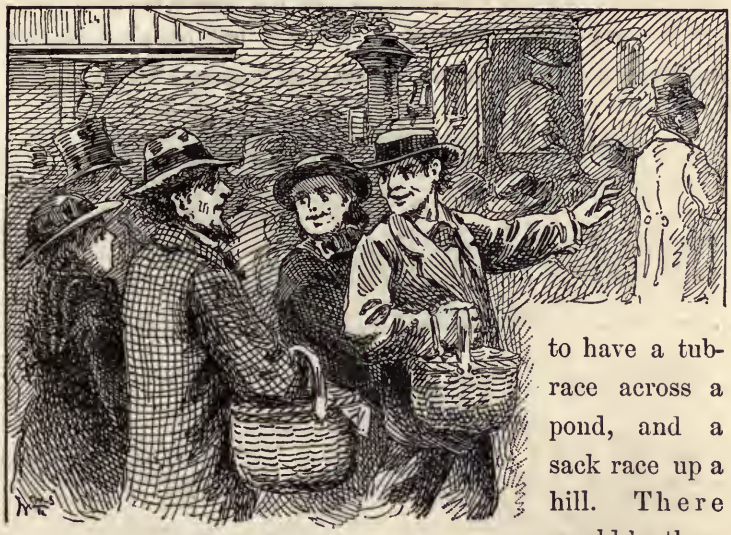
CHAPTER III.

A CELEBRATION EXPERIENCE.

ON resuming our journey to New York, we chanced to fall in with another bridal couple, also from Chicago, and with whom I had been slightly acquainted. Travelers journeying in the same direction for similar purposes, naturally feel interested in one another, there is a bond of sympathy between them. Newly married people particularly are affected by the presence of others in the same predicament. Singled out as they are and subjected to the curious gaze of the rest of mankind,—notwithstanding the efforts made to escape detection, the poor unfortunates are only too glad to receive the sympathy they get from others of their kind, and a mutual interest is the result. So we found our friends exceedingly pleasant traveling companions, who, as well as ourselves, had had their full share of novel adventures, the relating of which afforded us all infinite amusement; while their mirth knew no bounds when we told them our experiences in getting married, and getting along on our trip. As the friendship thus commenced continued for a number of years, the parties are justly entitled to a formal introduction:

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honor to present to you Mr. and Mrs. Jewell.

I noticed that a great many country persons were boarding our train, although it was quite early in the day; so I inquired of some of them what was the special occasion that brought them out. They told me that Jonesville was about to celebrate its semi-centennial anniversary, and there was to be a high old time there that very day. They were



THE GREAT CELEBRATION.

to have a tub-race across a pond, and a sack race up a hill. There would be three greased pigs for people to climb, and four greased poles for them to—do something or other with.

I was interested, although not enthusiastic; but when I learned that a part of the celebration would consist of a bicycle race, open to all competitors, and that the winner would receive five hundred dollars, my whole soul was ablaze. If there was anything I could do to perfection, riding a bicycle was that thing. I had practiced it for years, and no one in Chicago had been able to outride me.

"Here is my opportunity," I said to my wife. "We need

the money. Our three days' delay in trying to find each other consumed considerable capital. This five hundred dollars will not only set us right again, but give us quite a start in the world."

My wife was not favorably impressed with my proposition. She thought it looked like playing a game of chance for gain, which, as she regarded it, was the same as gambling.

"No, my dear," replied I, "it will not be playing, but working; and there is no element of chance, where one is

PART OF THE PROGRAMME.

sure of winning; and, besides, I shall be helping to promote a most worthy enterprise."

My wife, out of the goodness of her heart, rather than from her better judgment, suffered herself to be persuaded by my burning eloquence.

In view of my prospective fortune, I could not be mean; so I invited Mr. and Mrs. Jewell to stop over at Jonesville to witness my victory, and insisted on making them my guests.

There were a few other little expenses I had not reckoned on. For example, before I was allowed to compete for the bicycle prize, I was obliged to pay what was called an entrance fee of fifty dollars. Then I must borrow a bicycle, for which I was charged the exorbitant sum of twenty-five dollars more.

The race began. There was one man in particular on whom everybody was betting. His name was Sharpe; and he was lithe as an Indian. I saw at once that the real contest was to be between him and me.

He started out with utmost confidence and in a few seconds had put himself several turns of the wheel ahead of everybody else.

I was not frightened. I knew the virtue that lay in my considerable feet. I had faith in them. I felt that I had only to wait till they warmed to the business, when I should see them effecting execution like that of the piston-rod of a Corliss engine.

At first there was great shouting in favor of Sharpe, but as I began steadily to gain on him, the applause was less vigorous. When at length I placed myself by his side, people almost held their breath. He was evidently a favorate whom nobody in Jonesville wanted beaten, especially by a stranger.

I now apprehended an easy victory. I had made no spurt nor expended any of my reserve force, while it was plain to be seen that Sharpe was under a full head of steam, and vainly wishing he had more.

Without any great effort I placed myself some distance in the advance. Everything was going well and I was nearly home when I heard a piercing cry of distress. Turning about, I saw Sharpe lying flat on the ground with his bicycle

on top of him. He had run into a pile of stones, and, as I supposed, was seriously hurt. Only one impulse possessed me—to go to his relief.

As soon as I could get to him, I lifted the weight from his prostrate form, and tried to set him on his feet, but every movement seemed to pain him exceedingly. He declared that his leg was broken, and that he was injured internally.

THE PROMISE.

He had cut his lip on a fragment of stone, and as the blood flowed freely, several ladies fainted. He requested me to hold up his bicycle for him to lean against.

I did so.

Then he wanted to see if it were possible for him to mount it. I thought he was crazy. Anything but that. He did mount; and before I fully had time to comprehend the situation, he was making his vehicle fairly buzz on the home

AN UNGRATEFUL WRETCH.

stretch, and never did he stop till he reached the goal and was declared winner of the race, amid the deafening applause of the multitude.

If that was not a swindle I never saw one.

The next day the Jonesville *Gazette* came out with glaring headlines, saying that Mr. Sharpe had won an easy victory over the gentleman from Chicago, having had plenty of time to dismount, while on the track, for the purpose of *oiling his machine.*

After my disgrace, although Augusta met me with a sweet smile, she made me promise that I would never ride a bicycle again for money.

That same evening I got into another difficulty of a much worse sort.

Mr. Jewell and I left the ladies in the hotel while we went out to see a sack-race by moonlight. Strange to say, some of the most prominent citizens of Jonesville had been enticed into that ridiculous performance. Even lawyers and doctors allowed themselves to be tied up in a sack, while they tried to race down hill with each other.

Everything is governed by mania. Just now this was the mania. At another time you could no more have induced one of those respectable gentlemen to engage in this rude sport, than you could have persuaded him to eat raw oysters with a knife.

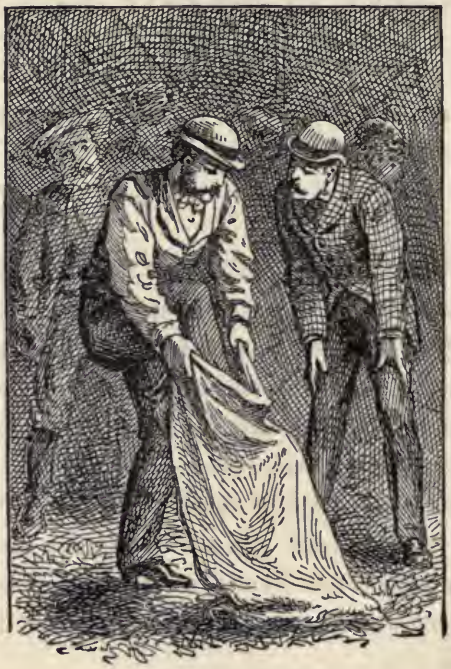
Unfortunately I myself am susceptible to the subtle power of the ruling mania, whatever it happens to be.

At first, when I was asked to participate in the amusement, I refused; but when fifty dollars were offered to the one who would go up the hill in a sack, making the fastest time, I thought I saw my way clear to recover the money I had paid out that morning as an entrance fee.

Mr. Jewell favored the scheme. He argued that I had much to gain, and nothing to lose. He thought my success would please my wife.

Enough said! Bring on the sack!

I had some difficulty in getting one large enough; but when once in it, I realized that my broad foundations would serve me well.



A NEW VENTURE.

Running up hill in a bag is simply a trial of muscle and grit; and, as I had plenty of both, I won. I more than won. In my anxiety to make a record that could never be beaten, I tore down all barriers, and went far beyond the stretched rope which was designed as the stopping-place. Those miserable Jonesville villains encouraged my going on,

although they very well knew—what I did not know—that directly in front of me was a deep railroad cut, whose banks of sand and gravel were very precipitous.

It was only a question of time, and the time speedily came. Down I went, heels over head, carrying tons of earth with me, and bringing other tons after me. Between the track and the embankment was a ditch filled with water; and into this I rolled, while the vast quantity of sand I had loosened rolled on top of me, until I could not move a muscle of my body, or obtain a breath of air.

Death would have ended my career then and there had it not been for my friend, Mr. Jewell. Learning from others what had befallen me, he threw himself into the treacherous cut,

THE RESULT.

at the risk of losing his own life, and at once began an anxious search for my body. This, in all probability, he would not have found till too late had it not been for the fortunate circumstance of stumbling across one of my feet, which had burst the sack, and protruded from the sand. That foot was my salvation. I followed it out of my living

THE RESCUE.

grave, a sadder, but a wiser man. Never had I a more narrow escape from a horrible death.

As soon as I was sufficiently restored to speak, I gave my hand to Mr. Jewell, and begged him to regard me as his willing servant for the rest of my life.

"Make me one promise," said I. "If ever it is in my power to do you a favor, you will not hesitate to let me know."

He promised.

"Whatever you shall ever ask," said I, "it shall be granted."

Little did I realize then how much those words would cost me. More than once I have almost wished he had left me in my grave.

But I must not anticipate.

My good wife was glad to see me again, although not prepared for the dirty and wretched appearance which I presented. Not one word of reproof passed her affectionate lips. She made me promise, however, as she gave me a hundred kisses, that I would never again engage in a sack-race. And she used such queer arguments, even saying that doing such things for money showed symptoms of the gambling mania. Did you ever!

I told her she would come to be so scrupulous, yet, that she would not engage in a raffle at a church fair. Then I learned, to my great grief, that she was opposed to that too.

I tried to explain to her that nothing is gambling unless those who engage in it *call* it gambling, and that the little diversions which are sometimes practiced by churches and Sunday-schools are only a nice way which people have of replenishing the treasury of the Lord. "There is a wide difference," said I, "between sin *per se* and sin which is not *per se*." But even this point, being a woman, she failed to see, and insisted on my giving the "right name" to those pecuniary games of chance in which even some saints of earth occasionally indulge.

Then I labored to show to her that what she was denouncing was simply a *way*—nothing in the world but a *way* of raising money, sometimes for the purpose of increasing a poor minister's salary, or of paying the interest on a mortgage.

"Yes," said she, "one way to make Hamburg cheese is to place common cheese in a Hamburg box. One way to make ox-marrow pomade is to take swine's fat, and put it in a pretty bottle labeled with the picture of an ox. One way to make a market for ideas is to have them placed over the autograph of a person who has notoriety, even though he may never have had an idea of his own. And one way to play Christian is to attach to a man the name of some popular church, while he indulges in worldliness to his heart's content. There are other ways."

At this point I dropped the argument; for there is no use in trying to convince a woman when she once gets her head set.

CHAPTER IV.

HOUSE-KEEPING.

REACHING New York somewhat more alive than dead, my first business was to rent a small printing-office in Newspaper Row, and start a weekly publication, called THE FARMER'S GUIDE.

I knew very little about farming; but I did not apprehend any difficulty on that account, for my aim was to make an original paper, free from that prejudice and dogmatism which many editors manifest, if, by chance, they happen to be well-informed in regard to the subjects they write about.

After investing enough capital to insure the starting of this business enterprise, my own means were entirely exhausted. Augusta, however, had a few hundred dollars that her father had given her as a wedding present, and I made the proposition to her that we take this and go to house-keeping. She did not readily respond to the idea. She intuitively felt, she said, that it would be a bad move, and advised our putting the money out at interest, and contenting ourselves with boarding at a moderate expense.

My wife's *instinct* seemed to be continually coming in conflict with my own cool, calm, reason-wrought judgment; but, bless her heart! after a brief struggle she generally saw the folly of trying to argue without arguments, and gracefully surrendered to my aforesaid judgment.

I was always right, logically; but, nevertheless, by mere chance, things would so come to pass, that, in most cases, we should have been much better off if her instinct had been followed.

"Very well," said she at the conclusion of our quiet little talk on the subject, "it shall be as you say. But first we must look for a house."

"We cannot rent a whole house," said I.

"I have heard about flats," she replied. "Are they too expensive?"

"Most certainly they are, my dear."

"Then what shall we do?"

"We must get a suite of rooms in a tenement-house."

I saw plainly enough that my wife was not pleased with this plan; but I had my heart set on it, so I said, in gentle accents:

"Now, darling, do not allow that shadow to rest on your beautiful brow, for you have only to remind yourself that the deprivations to which circumstances now compel us to submit will be exceedingly brief. My "Farmer's Guide" must soon bring in a rich return, and it cannot be many years before we may own a mansion on Fifth Avenue."

Augusta smiled and kissed me, as she said:

"Of course, you know best, and I will willingly live with you anywhere."

It is marvelous what a trusting nature that woman had.

The best we could do with our limited means was to rent two large rooms on the fifth floor of a business house.

My wife was delighted with my selection, it being so much better than she had dared to hope for.

The secret of happiness is not in what we get, but in getting more than we anticipate.

I left Augusta sitting on a soap-box in one of the otherwise empty rooms, engaged in nursing a headache, while I took her wedding present and her bill of items, and went out to order furniture, cooking utensils, groceries, etc.

I doubt not that the making of that bill of items—thinking of everything we needed, and remembering the small

HOME, SWEET HOME.

sum of money at our command—was the cause of her headache. And now that I recall the aggravating problem on which she was engaged, I am greatly surprised that she escaped a fatal brain fever.

One thing which she had noted down was, "Cheap carpet for the bedroom."

Seeing a carpet-store, I thought I might as well get that article first, and have done with it.

The clerk who waited on me had the "gift of gab" to perfection. Under the magic of his insidious persuasiveness I came to believe that the special thing which would please

THE ELOQUENT CLERK.

my wife more than all else was an elegant Brussels carpet. The one which he unrolled before my enraptured gaze displayed a wealth of delicate tints not to be compared with anything I had ever seen. The more I looked at it and the more I heard that man talk, the more spell-bound I became.

"Yes," said I, "we do want at least one article really nice;" and as I thought of my suffering wife occupying that cold, uncovered floor, and then, in imagination, saw her reclining on this carpet of richly-woven flowers, I said:

"I'll take it."

"Two dollars and a half a yard is very cheap for that class of goods," remarked the oily-tongued clerk. "What are the dimensions of your room?"

I looked at the paper which my wife had provided me with, and read:

"Twenty-two feet long by twenty feet wide."

"And a magnificent bedroom it is!" exclaimed the man. "You will not find many in this city so fine and airy."

I was delighted with his conversation. I grew prouder every moment.

"Of course," said he, "you must have something under your carpet to make it elastic to the tread; and you wouldn't think of adopting the vulgar country practice of padding with straw or old newspapers."

I answered him warmly, that I would adopt nothing vulgar.

"We have a lining of our own patent," said he, "which is decidedly the best thing in the market. It is made up largely of cedar shavings, to keep away moths."

"Do you charge extra for it?" I inquired.

"Only seventy-five cents a yard," he replied, with an air which seemed to say, it is not worth mentioning.

"I must have it," said I.

"You are a man of remarkably good sense," he replied, his eyes beaming with approbation.

I agreed with him.

"Will you have the carpet put down for me?" I inquired.

"Certainly. We shall engage the very best workmen for that purpose."

"Will you have it done immediately?"

"This very day, if you so order."

"Then I so order," said I.

I was just leaving the store, when the clerk called me back, and, after blushingly apologizing for troubling me, imparted the information that, in accordance with a rule

A DEPOSIT, PLEASE.

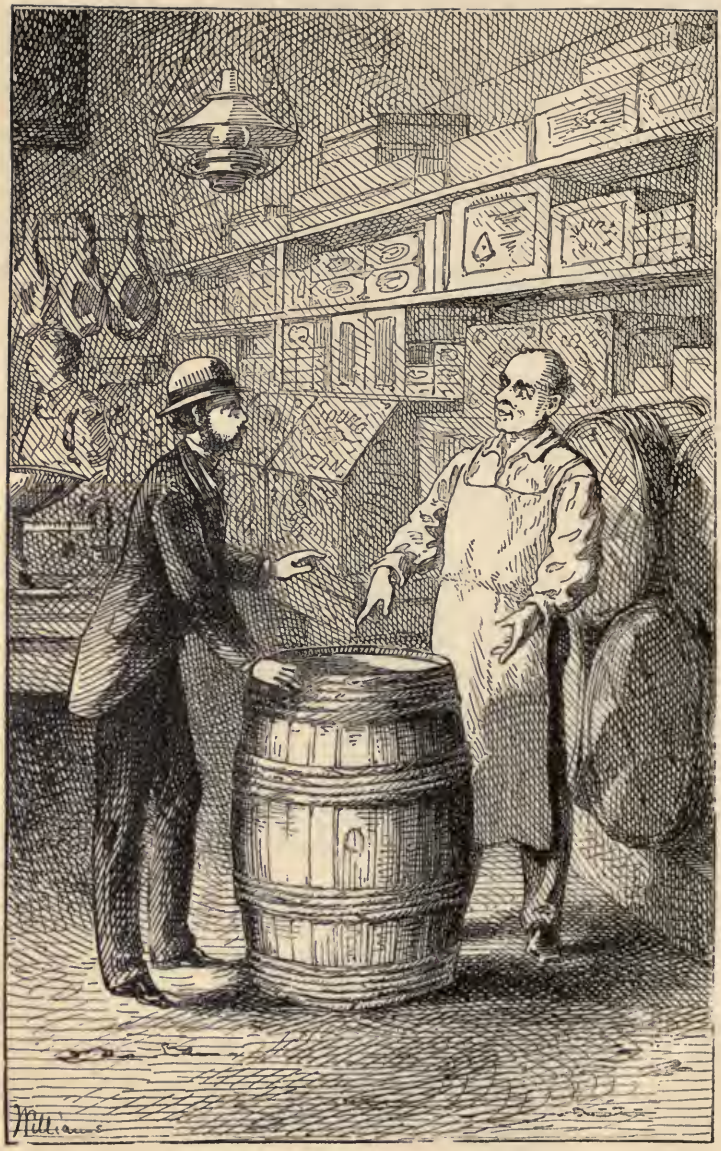
which his firm had adopted, it would be necessary for me to make a small deposit, in order to insure the delivery of the goods.

"Oh, yes!" I exclaimed, "How much shall it be?"

"Say, forty dollars," carelessly remarked the clerk.

I paid it.

My first impression was that there would not be much more to pay. I had not considered that there would be an



A SHARP BARGAIN.

extra charge for binding my carpet, another for making it up, and another for putting it down, and that all this was to be done in the very best manner. Neither had I considered that a yard of Brussels is only twenty-seven inches in width.

My next visit was to a grocery. Here I made a few purchases, and was doing well, when I came to the item "Molasses." My wife had neglected to say how much I should get.

I am very fond of the long-tailed sugar, and I resolved that griddle-cakes and molasses should be my chief diet for some time to come.

"If one wishes to economise," said the grocer, "he should buy all imperishable articles by the quantity. By the single gallon, this molasses will cost you one dollar; but by taking a barrel, which is forty gallons, at thirty-six dollars, you make a clean saving of four dollars, which, as Franklin would say, is equal to eight dollars earned."

To my mind, this was a very practical argument; so I closed the bargain in accordance with the grocer's advice.

By this time, I was tired of marketing, and, as I looked at the long list of purchases yet to make, I began to have a suspicion that I had not sufficient money to go around.

A wise idea struck me: I would wait till my wife was relieved of her headache, and then turn the unfinished work over to her. I recollected that the money was hers by right, and what could be more proper than for her to become responsible for its expenditure—especially as it was liable to fall short.

With this consoling conclusion, I put away the list of "things wanted," while I fell into a political controversy with one of the grocer's customers.

Toward evening I wended my way home.

When about half way up the numerous stairs leading to our rooms, I heard voices which indicated an unpleasant difference of opinion. To my astonishment, my wife's voice could be heard above all others.

I stopped to listen.

"I tell you," said she, "there is some mistake, and I

FACING THE STORM.

order you to stop putting down that carpet. My husband is not such a monstrous fool as to buy anything of that kind for a place like this!"

Had a bombshell that moment exploded in my face, I could not have felt more thoroughly used up. What to do I didn't know. My first thought was to turn and fly, go

back to Chicago, consider my marriage a dream, and resume the business of newspaper reporting, as though nothing had happened.

"Oh, how I wish my husband would come!" vociferated Augusta from the top floor of the house. "You would find yourselves dealing with a *man* then."

Was I a man? I asked of myself. After a reasonable doubt, I decided in the affirmative.

Yes, and like a man I would face the storm, instead of going back to Chicago.

"My dear," said I, as soon as I reached the room, "I bought that carpet on purpose for you. I thought you would like it, and out of the love of my heart—"

Augusta interrupted me; but I shall not publish her remarks, for, as I told her at the time, she would not have talked that way if she had been well. It was her headache, which, as I earnestly assured her, made her irresponsible for her impulsive words.

I cannot say that she was at all soothed by my charitable verdict.

However, in due time, she grew calm, and most respectfully listened to my cool, quiet, deliberate level-headedness.

Just as I was congratulating myself on a great word victory, we heard a confusion of sounds proceeding from one of the lower stairways, which apparently could neither have been more nor worse if Barnum's entire circus had been coming up to call on us. In a few moments, we heard men making use of the most shocking oaths, and giving every evidence of being as mad as mad could be.

"Do go down and see what the trouble is," requested Augusta.

But I knew too well what was coming, as soon as I heard an angry man declare, with an oath, that he would never again undertake a job of that sort where there was no elevator, and that nobody but a consummate idiot would ever ask to have such a thing brought to such a place.

"My dear," quietly remarked I to Augusta, there is no cause for alarm. It is only some men trying to roll up a barrel of molasses."

A HEROIC STRUGGLE.

"You don't mean to say," began Augusta, her large, bright eyes so keenly penetrating my soul that I was obliged to look down to the floor, "that you have"—

"Yes, my dear, I bought it for griddle cakes. It won't last long."

Astonishing as it may seem, Augusta answered not a word. Let it be recorded, to the shame of other wives, that not a word did she utter. She just went and sat down on

the soap-box, set her teeth hard together, placed one hand on top of her head, the other beneath her chin, and held on so unflinchingly that not a syllable could escape.

Oh, how I admired her heroic struggle against temptation! Plainly I could see the heaving billows of that tempestuous sea, to which she was inwardly crying, "Peace! peace!"

Complete triumph was hers.

When, at last, she spoke, it was only to say, with her sweetest smile:

"Isn't this romantic?"

"How so?" I inquired.

"Delightfully romantic!" she continued; "going to house-keeping in the fifth story of a business block, with nothing but a two-hundred-dollar carpet and a barrel of molasses."

No storm that she could have raised, although it had been packed full of lightning, would have so completely revealed my unmitigated idiocy as did this bit of quiet sunshine.

However, I would not have confessed to her, for the world, how I really felt. I was determined to carry a bold front, and make the most of what I had done.

"Our kitchen is much the smaller room," suggested Augusta, "and it may puzzle us a little to find space in it for that molasses."

"Why, I am sure I could set a dozen barrels there," I responded.

"But you forget the stove and all the groceries that the kitchen must contain. Besides, it must be our dining-room."

"Then we will put the molasses in the bedroom?"

"I dislike to see that pretty carpet injured," responded Augusta, in her blandest tones, as the barrel was rolled in.

"Trust me to provide against that," I replied. "In the first place, I shall put down these clean joist for the barrel to stand on, and shall then place some thick paper under the faucet to catch the drippings."

"Do you really think," inquired Augusta, meekly, "that the bedroom is the proper place for that molasses?"

"Certainly I do, under the circumstances. We have but

TRYING THE ARTICLE.

two places, and you yourself have shown conclusively that there is no room for it in the kitchen; therefore its going into the bedroom becomes a necessity; and what does Shakespeare say? 'There is no virtue like necessity.' What does Jeremy Taylor say? 'Nothing is intolerable that is necessary.' And what does our great and good Emerson say? 'Necessity does everything well;' and so say I."

"And what you four gentlemen say must be so," remarked Augusta. "Therefore the molasses remains in the bedroom."

That night we retired early. I had failed to provide a couch, but my wife arranged a very nice place for us on the floor, and we slept, as you might say, three in a bed,—Augusta and I and the barrel of molasses.

Before lying down, I had attempted to draw out a cup-full of the sweetening, so as to have it ready for breakfast; but, to my surprise, it would not run. Although I opened the faucet to its fullest extent, only a few drops could be coaxed from the barrel. I was worried. I laid down and tried to sleep, but nothing could I do except to toss about and wonder by what process I was to get access to my griddle-cake dressing.

It must have been about ten or eleven o'clock, when my wife, with a sort of twinkle in her voice, asked me if I had ever studied philosophy.

"Of course I have," I replied.

"And did you ever learn about the atmosphere pressing on everything it touches at the rate of fifteen pounds to the square inch?"

"Certainly."

"Then why not bore a little hole in the top of the barrel, so the air can get in?"

"Any fool would know enough for that," I ungraciously remarked; "but the trouble is I have no gimlet."

"I believe there is an augur among the tools in that box by the door," said Augusta. "They were left here this afternoon by a man whom the landlord sent to fix the windows. Don't get up now! Can't you just as well wait till morning?"

"No," said I, "this hole must be bored before I can sleep

a wink. It is my nature to get everything off of my mind."

"I should think you might accomplish that feat very early in the day, as a general rule," suggested my better-half, while I, with three or four vigorous turns, sent the augur through the top of the barrel.

A VENT HOLE.

"I am satisfied now," said I, regaining my proper position in our lowly bed. "If I should happen to oversleep in the morning, there will be nothing to hinder you from getting breakfast."

Pretty soon we both lost ourselves in that sweet slumber which belongs only to the innocent.

How long we had been in that blessed condition is uncertain, when I was awakened by a most frightful cry, proceeding from my wife.

"Take them off! Oh, take them off!" she continued to scream.

"What is it?" I inquired.

"Snakes!" came the reply.

Just at that moment, I felt something cold and clammy crawling up my back, and I jumped to my feet only to find

myself wading deep in molasses. I had left the faucet wide open after boring the hole in the barrel.

I shut it off as soon as I could, which, however, was quite a useless proceeding, inasmuch as the contents of the barrel were already at large on our beautiful carpet.

My wife began to cry, and, as for myself, I was ready to howl with grief and chagrin.

A NICE FIX.

"Augusta," said I, with what coolness I could command, "*I told you so.*"

This was the first opportunity I had ever had to quote that comforting remark to the woman of my choice, so I made the most of it.

"I told you so! and you know well enough that I told you so!" I reiterated.

"In the name of all that is out, *what* did you tell me?" sobbed Augusta.

"I told you that that barrel of molasses wouldn't last long."

My sweet wife continued to cry. I knew then, as well as words could tell me, that she mourned the loss of the molasses. It was her way of approving my purchase. Then I loved her more than ever, and set to work in earnest to pour comfort into her heart.

"Never mind your loss," said I. "True, it is very great, but you have *me* left. Molasses may come, and molasses may go, but I shall be with you always. Why, then, should you be discouraged? I will not withdraw from you although everything else should be gone."

This was so consoling to her that she laughed a little.

"I am reminded," said she, "of Elder Perkins' prayer."

"What was that?"

"O Lord, even though thy church should be broken up, and thy cause on earth be forever lost, suffer not thyself to repent having made the world, for I will stand by thee without ceasing, even though all others forsake thy countenance."

Even to this day, I have not found out what Augusta meant by quoting that singular prayer. Perhaps the loss of the griddle-cake dressing had so overwhelmed her that she was not in her right mind.

CHAPTER V.

OUR FIRST SUNDAY AT HOME.

IN a modest, very modest way, we had set up our household gods, and they reminded us of our glorious independence—and our debts.

"Now, let us begin right," said Augusta. "This is the first Sabbath that has smiled on our new home, and we must go to church."

"That proposition does not strike me favorably," I replied. "Sermons, for the most part, are exceedingly dull. You might listen to a dozen of them without getting a single joke worth remembering."

If at that time I had ever attended any of the Brooklyn churches my criticism would not have been so harsh.

"But it is our duty to go to church," pleaded Augusta. "It is not only the avenue to heaven, but the avenue to society. Besides, our wedding-clothes will never be in better condition than they are now, and I think that even in this great city we can attract some attention, and that, too, from the very best people."

"You are right, my dear," I answered, enthusiastically. "It *is* our duty to go to church, and we shall be the finest looking couple there. Let us get ready at once. My wedding suit is in the valise."

"Yes," said Augusta, "and I am sorry you have not taken better care of your clothes. They should have been removed, unfolded, and hung up, so that the creases would be smoothed out."

"I know that," I replied; "but, for some reason or other, I have not been able to unlock that valise since leaving Chicago. The key appears twice too large, although when I bought the valise, the day before the wedding, it fitted exactly."

"Let me try it," said Augusta. "Why, this key was never made for this lock," she continued. "Where is the right key?"

"Ask me some easy question," said I.

Our trunk keys and all the keys we possessed were tried in succession, but that valise remained obstinate.

"We have not a moment to lose," urged my wife.

"And not a moment shall be lost," I responded. "So, here goes!"

The lock was soon broken.

"What is this?" I exclaimed, taking out a diminutive white garment, heavily embroidered.

"That," said my astonished companion, "is an infant's long dress!—and here is another, and another! There are four of them!"

"And what are these?"

"Baby clothes—more baby clothes! Nothing but baby clothes!"

"And what is the meaning of all this? Surely, I did not wear these things at our wedding?"

"The meaning is," replied Augusta, her voice beginning to tremble with the mingled emotions of anger and grief, "you have committed an act of inexcusable carelessness.

Somewhere between Chicago and New York you picked up another person's valise and left your own."

"Now, don't be too hard on a poor fellow," I pleaded. "Is it not barely possible that it was the other person who picked up *my* valise and left *his?* Both of them being new, and of the same size and pattern, the mistake might easily occur; and I, for one, think it quite proper to exercise charity toward him."

"WHAT ARE THESE?"

"Now we cannnot go to church," sadly spoke Augusta, "for you have nothing to wear."

"True," I replied; "but would it not be proper to expend a part of our sorrow over the little darling for whom these new white robes were designed? Who shall say that he or she may not find himself or herself in this cold world with nothing to wear—nothing to wear."

"Nothing, except the finest suit of broadcloth ever made in Chicago," ejaculated my companion, showing slight symptoms of exasperation.

"Never mind," said I. "It is some comfort to know that the little darling will not go *into a fit* the first thing."

"Promise me one thing," urged Augusta, solemnly.

"What is it, my dear?"

"That hereafter, for my sake as well as your own, you will be more careful, thoughtful, and systematic in everything you do."

"Augusta, dear, you know not what you ask. My whole nature rebels against system. In everything I am original. Take music; when I utter one note nobody can possibly predict what note will follow. My life is interesting simply because it is rich in surprises. It is a river which, having left its muddy channel, is on its way to glory by cuts of its own making."

"Such a river, as a river, would do little good and much harm," cruelly remarked my wife.

Then we discussed that point.

Instead of going to church, we had our little conference at home. In justice to myself I feel impelled to say, that I beat my good wife at every turn in the argument. Still, she would not give up. It was not natural for her to give up. In this respect, she was a very peculiar woman.

"What is to be done with these baby garments?" I inquired, just as she had asked me for the seventh time if I would not try to be more thoughtful hereafter.

She suggested that we present them to the orphan asylum.

"No," I answered; "they are too nice for a charitable institution. They would make everything else in the house look cheap and ugly by comparison."

"Suppose, then, we give them to some of our neighbors."

"That would be better," I replied; "only they might think we had stolen them."

"Then why not sell them? Surely we need the money," urged my thrifty companion.

"No," said I. "Those goods are too fine to be sacrificed at the low figure to be obtained from an old-clothes speculator. Listen to me. I have a cool-headed proposition to make."

"What is it?"

"We will keep them."

"Nonsense!" said Augusta.

We dropped the subject.

Oh, how many quarrels might be avoided if husbands and wives—especially wives—would learn when to drop the subject. Social intercourse is no ground on which to fight for victories. No sieges should be laid there. He is the true victor who first gives up. To surrender gracefully is the height of courtesy and good manners. I have never seen a fly that I could not rid myself of by a day or two of vigorous warfare against him. The question is, does it pay to do so much for such a small result? I think of this when I am tempted to talk a great deal for the purpose of carrying a point.

As I said, Augusta and I dropped the subject.

CHAPTER VI.

A FIRE ESCAPE.

WE had been in New York three months, and our affairs were in pretty good shape. *The Farmer's Guide* was meeting with considerable success, although many of its subscribers regarded my most laborious editorials as jokes, and my best jokes as conscientious efforts to be solemn. This gave me little trouble, however, so long as sufficient money came in to keep me out of debt.

At this time we received a letter from our bridal friends, Mr. and Mrs. Jewell. They were spending the summer at Long Branch, and sent us a most cordial invitation to come to their hotel, for a week's visit, as their guests.

I decided at once that, on account of the pressure of business, we could not accept the invitation. Augusta decided —on instinct, of course—that we could accept it. This difference of decision lead to a quiet little talk, in which the astonishing fact was brought out that my wife was a little lonesome, with threatening indications of homesickness.

Astonishing, I say; for here we were in a city containing more than twelve hundred thousand souls, besides having a home of our own. Three times a day she could fondly gaze on me, and, moreover, I was frequently home from my office as early as eleven o'clock at night.

True, the rich and idle were accustomed to remain at the seashore, or on a mountain, during hot weather; but I had provided better things for my beloved, inasmuch as she could look daily on the ebb and flow of the East River, while occupying a mountainous elevation on the fifth story of a costly pile.

A WATER VIEW.

Still, although centered in these manifold advantages, she had allowed herself to pine just a little. She was tired of the walls, she said. This deplorable manifestation of womanly infirmity surprised and grieved me. I have no patience with imaginary evils.

So we continued our quiet little talk, and the upshot of it was that we both remained bent on having our own way, until, at last, we effected a compromise.

She would go. I wouldn't. She went. I stayed.

That night I walked home at the usual hour, intending to lose myself in my accustomed sound sleep and pleasant dreams. Will you believe it, everything seemed different to me the moment I opened the door of our lodgings. The stillness was painful. I lighted the lamp, sat down on the edge of the bed, and soon found myself looking abstractedly at the pictureless walls of the room. In less than two min-

ALONE.

utes I was heartily tired of those walls. In five minutes I hated them. What my wife had said in the morning now came back to me in such touching plaintiveness that my heart was melted. It seemed to me that the words I had spoken to her must have been quarried from an iceberg; I began to fear she would never come back. In that case, I soliloquized, I will not live another day.

I got into bed, but not to sleep. I do not know whether I was a baby or a fool; but I was actually afraid of the dark. Almost everything I looked at or thought of made me nervous.

For the first time since occupying those lofty apartments I got to worrying about the possibility of a fire breaking out in some of the lower stories, and cutting off all ways of escape. Why such a thing had never occurred to me in the presence of my wife is a psychological problem which I don't pretend to be able to solve.

SMELLING SMOKE.

After tossing restlessly about for an hour, I actually thought I smelt smoke. In another minute it seemed to me I heard the roar of flames on one of the lower stairways. Then came sounds like the crackling of dry wood on fire.

Perhaps I was half asleep and partially dreaming. No matter. The danger was sufficiently real to bring me out of bed rather quicker than I had ever gotten out before. Rushing to the door, I opened it and stepped into the hall. No glaring flames or clouds of smoke greeting me there, I hastened down all the stairs. Having satisfied myself that fancy had deluded my senses I retraced my

steps till I reached my apartments, when I discovered that a current of air had closed the door, and that it was fastened by the spring lock. I felt for my latch key, which I always carried in my pocket. Unfortunately, my pocket was in my pantaloons, on the other side of the door.

If I had had my boots on, I could have done some pretty effective kicking, and perhaps broken the lock; but I was barefoot.

AWAKING THE WIDOW.

It occurred to me that the janitress might have a duplicate to my key. She was a widow, and occupied a little bedroom at the end of the hall. I asked myself if I dared to wake her up, and decided in the negative; but after walking back an forth in the hall for an hour, I decided in the affirmative.

"Who is there?" cried Widow Tootle, in response to my knock, her voice indicating that she was frightened half to death.

I never had the happy faculty of saying just the right thing at the right moment, especially in a time of pressing emergency; so I answered—I didn't answer anything; for just then I heard an ominous sound, like the click of a pistol, while the irate janitress hoarsely screamed, "Leave that door this instant, or I will shoot you!"

I went away disgusted.

How I regretted not having gone to Long Branch. I thought of starting for it immediately, but there were two reasons which had some weight in preventing: First, there was no boat or train going out at that time of night. Second, I had nothing to wear.

I experienced a most wretched time, waiting for daylight.

A BARRICADE.

When, at last, it did come, I began to realize that it was not what I wanted. I was afraid of the janitress.

I heard footsteps approaching. A happy idea struck me. The next instant, I had crept into a corner and barricaded more than half of myself behind a rubber door-mat.

The intruder was not the janitress, but the boy who brought the morning papers. To him I explained the

situation. He was interested. In consideration of the promise of half a dollar, he agreed to neglect his important duties, to the extent of interceding with Widow Tootle in my behalf, and of procuring her duplicate key to my room.

This scheme worked satisfactorily.

The first business to which I attended that day, after eating my breakfast, was the purchase of a large coil of rope, which I ordered to be placed under the head of my bed, to be used, in connection with the window, for a fire-escape, in case of need.

It might be said that this foresight was providential, for that very night I was aroused from sleep by an alarm of fire which left no room for the play of imagination. The very building which I occupied was actually on fire.

As I looked out of the window and saw bright sparks madly whirling in the air, and a great volume of smoke curling above my head, my heart almost ceased to beat.

Only one thought possessed me. The rope. In less than a minute I had tied one end of it around the radiator, and thrown the other end out the window. Then I began to go down, hand over hand. Before I was half way to the ground my strength was so much exhausted that I could do nothing but grasp the rope as firmly as possible and let myself slide.

The objection to this process was that it left scarcely a vestige of skin on the inside of my hands. It seemed as though my arms would be pulled from their sockets. At last I fell. Happily, however, the distance was not great, and happily, too, I had the good fortune to break my fall by landing on the head of a policeman. He was indignant beyond all reason, and threatened to arrest me for assault and battery.

"Why didn't you come down the stairs?" he muttered, feeling of a bump behind his ear about the size of a goose egg.

I maintained a dignified silence.

The fact is, I had not thought of the possibility of getting down stairs.

"The fire is all out, now," said one of the men. "No harm is done, except to a few boards on the roof, and the loss of the tar which covered the tin."

The next day, with both hands heavily bandaged, I started for Long Branch. Started—that is all—for at the street door whom did I meet but my dearly beloved wife.

"Why did you come home so soon?" I inquired.

"I was lonesome without you," she replied. "But, dear me, what is the matter with your hands?"

I explained.

My dear wife could

ASSAULT AND BATTERY.

not half laugh for crying, and could not half cry for laughing.

We mutually declared we had never before loved each other so devotedly as we did then.

"Next time we will both go," said I.

STARTING FOR LONG BRANCH.

"Or both stay," said she.

Sometimes we do not know how much we love our dear ones until we are parted from them. The heart needs its seasons of fasting as well as the stomach. By being with each other continually, our affection has no time to settle down into a mold and take permanent shape. Let a body

of water once clarify, we can see all that there is in it. The soul must not be too constantly agitated, even with the sacred humor of love. Give it Lent and the Good Fridays. Let it rest betimes, feeling nothing and cherishing no one, until it is half starved. Then it is that the soul can be looked into so clearly, that its infinite wealth of affection is revealed.

Now is it not singular that Augusta does not agree with me even in this? I verily believe she wants to be loved all the time—every day of every season—and then she would not care if each day was as a thousand years.

CHAPTER VII.

A LEGACY.

ABOUT the first of December I received a telegraphic message from Chicago containing glorious news; my wife's uncle, reputed to have been worth two million of dollars, had just died. I use the word "glorious" advisedly, because the message itself asserted that he had "gone to glory."

We had expected a considerable present from him on the day of our wedding, but our expectations were not realized, though he assured us at the time that he had already remembered us very generously in his will. And very generously we remembered these words when the news came of his death.

"Now Augusta," I said, "we will start life anew. Your health is delicate, and therefore you need the most favorable surroundings that can be afforded."

"What do you propose?" she inquired.

"That we leave these miserable rooms on high and go down to earth to live."

"Can we do any better, in our circumstances?" asked Augusta.

"This telegram guarantees a great improvement in our circumstances," I replied.

"I think we had better wait until we ascertain fully what disposition my dear uncle has made of his property," remarked Augusta.

But I could not wait. It is not my nature to wait. Before that day's sun went down I had rented a good two-story house on Bleecker Street. From the proceeds of *The Farmer's Guide*, I was able to pay a month's rent in

CHRISTINE.

advance, and buy an oil painting, which I got cheap for fifty dollars.

What astonished Augusta more than anything else was that I hired a girl to do the housework. She was a young and pretty Swede. Her name was Christine.

My wife did not say much, but rather intimated that she should have preferred making the selection of housemaid herself. Women are queer about some things. I really did

the best I could, and picked out the very handsomest girl there was at the headquarters of the Labor Bureau, and still my wife was not wholly satisfied.

We had just got settled in our new home, when a letter came from the executor of Uncle Jake's will. He said that

EXPRESS CHARGES.

the deceased had left to us his entire library, consisting of over two hundred volumes.

Now I happened to know something about that library. Uncle Jake had inherited it from his father, who was a clergyman; and a drier lot of theological literature never encumbered shelves than were those wretched old books.

I advised Augusta not to accept her valuable legacy, but

to give instructions to have the books burned, in order that they might furnish the only light of which they were capable, and by whose rays the testator might succeed in reaching the far off glory, to which, by way of courtesy, he had been consigned by telegraph, at three cents a word.

Augusta reproved me for making light of so serious a matter. But I was not reconciled. I called to mind the many goods I had ordered, on the strength of money, which, as I told the merchants, was coming from Chicago.

My wife insisted on receiving the books, so I telegraphed at night rates, "send them on."

They were sent by express at my expense, and the bill amounted to thirty-six dollars and eighteen cents.

I tried to leave the books on the hands of the Express Company to cover their charges, but my proposal was scorned—as it ought to have been. The express agent finally consented, out of the goodness of his heart, to give me time to turn around before compelling me to pay the money and take the goods.

All this tribulation, however, was as nothing compared with the trouble that some of those books afterwards brought upon us.

The troubles growing out of the possession of property, compared with the blessings, are as the weeds which grow out of the ground compared with the corn. To become miserly is to feel poor to the extent of everything we have not yet acquired.

Augusta herself unconsciously condemned her departed uncle by quoting approvingly from the Koran: "When a man dies, they who survive him ask what property he has left behind. The angel who bends over the dying man, asks what good deeds he has sent before him."

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAMPAGNE IN THE WRONG PLACE.

A WEEK before the holidays, a letter came from our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Jewell, saying that they were coming to the city to spend the winter, and that, if convenient to us, they would pay us a visit Christmas evening.

This put us—me, at least—in something of a flurry. I knew I was poor, but I was anxious to keep up appearances, especially before Mr. and Mrs. Jewell. I answered their letter immediately, telling them we should be more than pleased to see them at the appointed time.

Mrs. Berkeley suggested that we should provide a few simple refreshments for the occasion.

"What shall we get?" I inquired.

"Oh, something inexpensive."

"Cake?" I said.

"Cake and lemonade," said she.

That day I bought the lemons; but they were so cheap, that it seemed as though I was doing a very small thing in not exhibiting more liberality toward one who had extricated me from a sand-bank.

The idea struck me that I might as well get something that would surprise my wife, and, at the same time, do justice to my own grateful feelings.

The idea grew on me. There is a particular class of ideas that always do grow on me with astounding rapidity, whenever they happen to get once started in my fertile brain. This was one of that class. At first, it presented itself as a bottle of cheap wine; then a bottle of medium-priced wine; then a bottle of high-priced wine; then two bottles; then three; and the end of it was that I bought a whole case of the best champagne there was in the store. In order to pay twenty-eight dollars for it, I had to pawn my gold watch.

My wife *was* surprised. In her impulsiveness, she talked to me much as though I was a born fool, instead of being her legal lord, and the editor-in-chief of *The Farmers' Guide.*

I assured her that her head was aching, and that therefore I could generously overlook the somewhat unfavorable conclusions to which her invalid condition had unfortunately given rise in her perturbed mind.

Then her mind *was* perturbed.

The more I said, the more impulsive she became.

What made the matter worse, in her estimation, was that, on the Sunday previous, we had rented a pew in one of the "down-town" churches. (It was about the only thing we could get "on time.") And the minister, the Rev. Saul Shepherdskin, who had called at our house the very next day, in conversation with Mrs. Berkeley, had expressed himself in most emphatic terms against the use of intoxicating beverages. The proud woman had assured the man of total abstinence principles that *her* husband never drank anything stronger than tea, and would not, on any consideration, lend encouragement to the terrible vice of intemperance.

To which the minister had solemnly replied:

"Amen."

"Now, Augusta," said I, "you have no right to allow the parson's conscientious scruples to worry you. He shall never know that we have had champagne in the house; for I ordered the wine-merchant not to send it here till he had taken the twelve bottles out of the case, and wrapped them up in such shape that no one would have a suspicion of the contents."

REV. SHEPHERDSKIN.

To this my wife answered energetically, that she could have but little respect for one who would sneak behind a petty deception to hide his shamefaced conduct from the world.

I did not exactly like that way of arguing; so I told her again that she had a dangerous headache.

From this, we fell into a quiet little talk of one or two hours' duration. Finally, my wife yielded to my cool, calm level-headedness, as she always yields to the inevitable. Her heart is too full of love to hold out forever against anything. But as to her opinions, I don't think she ever changes them. In that respect she is a very peculiar woman.

As Christmas drew near, my excellent wife was fully herself again, filling the house with an air of joy. She even went so far as to purchase, with a little money of her own, a very pretty set of champagne glasses; "for," said she, "it will not be quite proper for our company to drink out of the bottles."

The evening came.

So did Mr. and Mrs. Jewell.

We had a jolly time.

I requested Mrs. Berkeley to bring on the cake and wine.

The cake she brought, but reported that the wine could not be found.

"It is in that square bundle under the library table," I whispered in her ear.

She went to the library, but returned in a minute, saying:

"It is not there."

Asking my guests to excuse me, I went on a hunting expedition for the missing property. It continued to be missing. I looked high and low, through every room in the house; but in vain. I summoned Christine, and demanded of her where she had put the square bundle that had been in the library. She declared she had not entered the library for a week, and had never seen any bundle there, and knew nothing about it. I believed her. She was my own selection. My wife gave her a penetrating look, but allowed no penetrating word to escape her lips. My wife was a jewel of inconsistency. Although she had been so strongly opposed to that champagne in the first place, yet now that it was gone, and her beautiful glasses must remain unfilled, she was as bitterly disappointed as myself.

Who can understand woman!

During the remainder of the evening our spirits didn't freely flow. We had rather a dry time.

At the proper hour, Mr. and Mrs. Jewell took their departure.

Mrs. Berkeley and I again thoroughly ransacked the house for the lost treasure, and then sat down, fully determined to solve the mystery of its disappearance.

"This *is* a joke on us," I began, making an effort to smile.

THE SEARCH.

"It is a joke which I hope the Reverend Shepherdskin will never hear of," answered Augusta.

"I think we have nothing to fear from him," said I, "for I carried him a fine lot of books last evening for a Christmas present."

"What books?"

"Oh, Clarke's Commentary, Barnes' Notes, Scott's Bible, Campbell's Gospels, Macknight on the Epistles, and several others, I don't know what all."

"Did you say you carried them to him?" asked Augusta.

"Yes; I did them up in a bundle, and then waited till after dark, so that people would not know I was my own carrier, and then took the package to him myself."

"It is very strange," said Augusta, "but just before dark, last evening, I found a package in the library containing just such books as you mention; and, thinking the package had not been undone since it came from Chicago, I took out the books, and put them on the shelves, where they still remain."

HOW IT WAS DONE.

"Then what did I take to the minister?" I inquired; but the next instant we both sprang to our feet, and exclaimed:

"THE WINE!"

"What did you say to him?" inquired my wife, the moment her subsiding emotion allowed her to speak audibly.

"I said, 'Rev. Mr. Shepherdskin, my wife sends her compliments, and begs you to accept this little token of her regard, not for its intrinsic worth, but for its spirit. She has often spoken of your eloquent sermons, and has given it as her opinion that they could not have been prepared with-

out the aid of just such inspiration as you will find in this Christmas present. Good night.'"

"How could you have said that?" groaned my wife.

"Easily enough, my dear. I spent a whole hour composing it and committing it to memory."

Augusta was too full for utterance.

There was silence in our house for the space of a minute;

THE DELIVERY.

when I made bold to remark, that "if I had been consulted, as I ought to have been, before the package in the library was undone, and the books it contained replaced on the shelves, the disgraceful mistake would not have occurred."

At this, my wife's power of speech returned.

"If *I* had been consulted," said she, "as any man of sense

would know I should have been, concerning the disposition of my own books, you would not have had the opportunity to disgrace both of us before the world. I can never again look the Reverend Shepherdskin in the face, and it is all your fault."

I do not think that anything I could have said would have made Augusta acknowledge that the blame lay at her door. She was in no condition to listen patiently to anything I might say in that direction; so I simply inquired, in a kindly and solicitous manner, after her health, and suggested that she possibly might need the doctor.

She was so discourteous as to make no reply, and I am sorry to state that on other and similar occasions she had been guilty of this same incivility.

We did not attend church the next Sunday, and our absence must have been noted by the minister, for early Monday afternoon he called on my wife.

She received him with downcast countenance, and began at once to stammer an apology, which must have been very chaotic, for she had no intention of telling the whole truth concerning our wine transaction.

"My dear Mrs. Berkeley," broke in the clergyman, "you couldn't have sent me a Christmas present that would have been more acceptable than that delicious medicine. It is just what I needed. At first, I was slightly shocked, remembering that I have a reputation to sustain, which is dearer to me than the apple of mine eye; but, on reflection, I saw that you were a remarkably discreet woman, and had made careful provision for my protection. The manner in which the medicine was done up was well calculated to deceive the wicked eyes of a scandal-loving world, while the caution which prompted you to place the package in no

other hands than those of your faithful husband, and not even in his until after dark, proved to me conclusively that you are an adept in cunning expediency. My dear Mrs. Berkeley," he continued, "still holding her hand with firm grasp, "in what way can I ever sufficiently show my grati-

A PASTORAL CALL.

tude for your generous and ingenious conduct? Besides being a Christian, you are evidently a clever woman of the world, which is a most happy combination, at least, in the opinion of every wise and politic man. Now, my dear, good woman, since we so happily understand each other, we can

henceforth laugh at society, which must be content to remain in ignorance of our mutual secret."

"I think I understand *you*," replied Augusta, her face all aglow with indignation.

It was the minister's turn to be confused.

"What do you mean?" said he.

"I mean that you have so far fallen in my estimation that I shall never have any respect for you again, and I want you to take your departure as quickly as convenient."

The crestfallen Shepherdskin went away, wondering more than ever how he happened to get the present of that wine; and especially wondering how it happened to come from Mrs. Berkeley, who had turned out to be quite a different woman from what he had been led to suppose.

A week later there was a wedding in Mr. Shepherdskin's church, and Mr. Shepherdskin was expected to officiate. To what extent that expectation was realized, may be best ascertained by reference to the city newspapers of next day's issue, where the head-lines were as follows:

CLERICAL DRUNKENNESS!

A Wedding in High Life Brought Low by the Maudlin Talk of the Rev. Saul Shepherdskin while in a State of Intoxication.

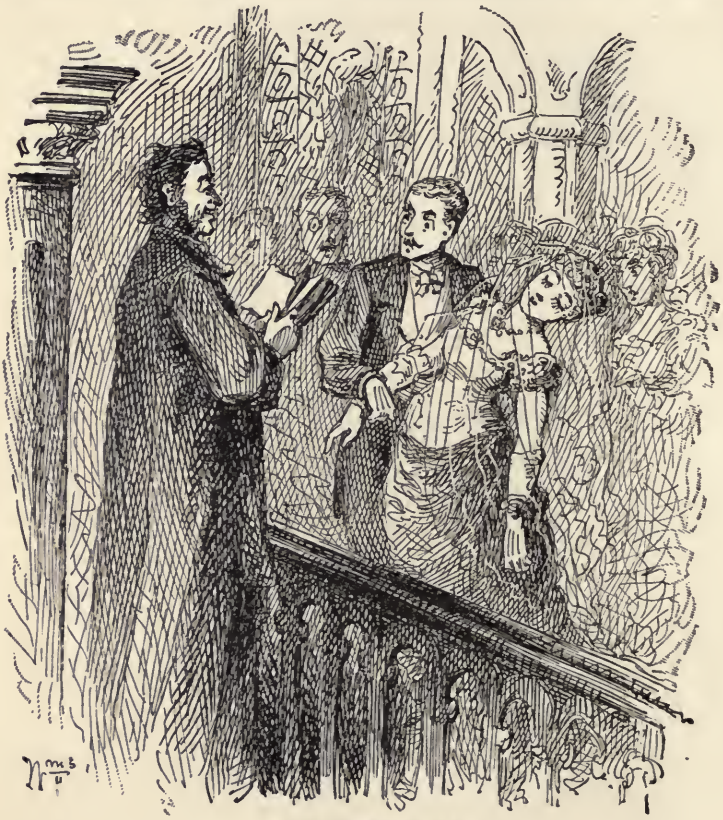
Then followed two or three solid columns of what New Yorkers called "mighty interesting reading."

My wife was in mental agony, predicting that Shepherdskin would be tried by a church council, and then it would come out where he had obtained his wine.

She was right about it.

But Shepherdskin was acquitted of any guilt in the matter.

The members of his church, with the exception of the immediate friends of the bride and groom whom he had attempted to marry, stood by him to the last. The acquittal, however, was not secured until the church over which he had ministered was so torn and dismembered that no twelve



TOO MUCH MEDICINE.

baskets which were ever made could have begun to hold the fragments. The verdict of "innocent" seems to have been rendered on the ground of *mistaken identity*. That is to say, the parson had innocently swallowed the champagne, thinking it was harmless medicine. His friends concluded

unanimously that no one was in the least to blame in the matter except "that unchristian woman who had most shamefully and wickedly taken advantage of the holy man, by sending him, on pretence of friendship, a most vile and poisonous decoction."

One day, a delegation of six of the ugliest-looking women I ever set eyes on called on Augusta, and, after unrolling a lengthy paper, stated that they had come to urge her, in view of the late unpleasantness which her loose principles and a total abstinence pledge.

This was rich, considering that my wife did not know the taste of one kind of liquor from another.

She listened patiently to all they had to say, until they began to shower their praises on "that dear, good man, whose sufferings, on account of the wrong that had been cruelly put upon him, would yet carry him to the grave." I was in the kitchen, where I could hear every word, and I should have rushed into the sitting-room and confronted the visitors, for the purpose of defending my wife, had it not been that I felt largely confident that she could defend herself. This is the way she did it:

"Ladies," said she, "I thank you for

your solicitation on my behalf; but, really, I do not feel the need of the reformation which you urge. As to the irreparable mischief of which you seem to think I have been guilty, I feel that I have done nothing worse than to expose to the unprejudiced world a canting hypocrite. Those do

BEHIND THE DOOR.

the greatest wrong who are determined to see no wrong in one whose questionable compliments they have freely allowed themselves to receive."

The delegation blushed.

"I do not know what you are hinting at," returned one of them.

"We have heard," said another, "that you yourself are not responsible for the sending of that horrid champagne to our dear minister, but that it was wholly the fault of your husband. We hope, for your sake, that the report is true, and, in that case, we wish to see Mr. Berkeley, and labor with him, that he may be saved ere it is too late."

"You cannot improve my worthy husband one iota," answered Augusta, with considerable spirit. "If August could have had his way, and if I had not interfered with his arrangements, your minister would not have received the expensive gift, which he was glad enough to retain, when it was his duty, as a man of honor, either to return it, or to demand an explanation."

"Oh, how I loved my wife, and how astonished I was to hear her taking all the blame to herself, and making me out an unblemished angel. I remembered the night when I tried to prove that very position to her, and how unkindly she took it. Would she admit to my face that I was blameless? Not at all. She would see me blamed first. In this respect she was a very peculiar woman.

Still, when I heard her laying claim to all the wrong that had been committed, I felt ashamed of myself. I did not want it to go that way. I wonder if man, mighty man, is ever inconsistent.

Here I was in possession of the very thing I had contended for, and a more unsatisfactory thing could not be conceived of.

I waited impatiently for those women to go away, and then I went into the sitting-room, apparently from out-doors, and, without unnecessary delay, took my wife in my arms, and kissed her more than twenty times, assuring her between

times, right out of my heart of hearts, that she never did a wrong thing in her life.

She was astonished.

Sometimes I think love is folly; but when I get right into the heart of my wife, and she into mine, there is no heaven I desire beside. Perhaps the little playful roots of an apple

AFTER THE STORM.

tree think they are self-sufficient. But what would they be if the sun were to refuse to shine? Although unseen by them, it is still a constant necessity of their existence. What sunlight is to subterranean life, woman's love is to the dark and groveling soul of man.

CHAPTER IX.

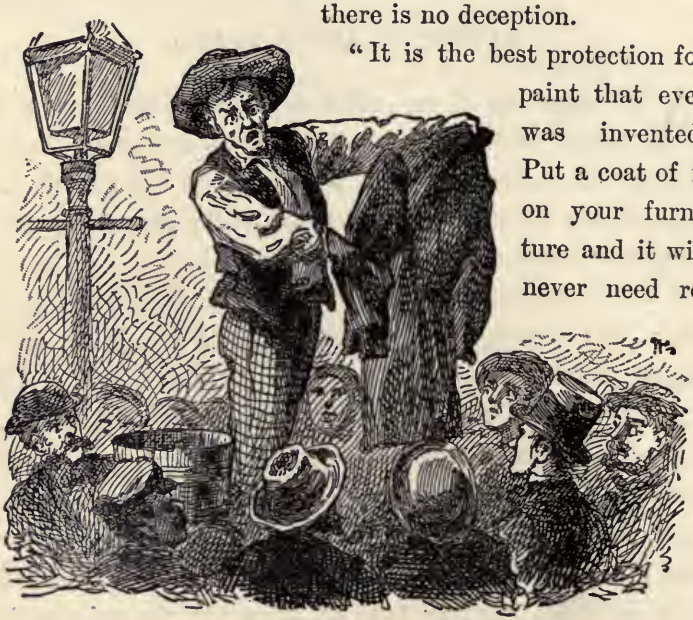
PATENT GLAZING FLUID.

AS I came out of my office one day, I found a man on the sidewalk whose glib tongue was attracting a large number of people. He had something to sell which he claimed was the most useful article and the most important discovery that had ever been made.

I am always interested in every new manifestation of genius, art, or progress; so I stopped to ascertain what the wonder might be. "*Prof. Edom's Glazing Fluid*," was what the peddler called it, and he was giving exhibitions of the marvels which could be wrought with it.

"The peculiarity of this remarkable article," said he, "consists in its being able to give the appearance of *newness* to everything which is covered with it. While it is itself colorless, it never fails to bring out the coloring of other objects to the best advantage. But, ladies and gentlemen, this is its least merit. It makes everything absolutely water-proof to which it is applied. Here, for instance, is my coat, you notice what a beautiful gloss it has. That is given wholly by the Glazing Fluid. Before the fluid was put on, my coat was so faded and shabby in appearance that I was ashamed of it; but afterwards I proudly wore it to the President's reception, and it was the best looking piece of goods in the capitol of our nation.

"Observe now what I do with this coat. I dip it into a bucket of dirty water. Here it goes. Watch me now, I take it out of the water and give it a few vigorous shakes. Very good. The coat is as dry and clean as it was before the experiment was tried. Examine it for yourselves, ladies and gentlemen, in order that you may be convinced that there is no deception.



"WATCH ME NOW!"

"It is the best protection for paint that ever was invented. Put a coat of it on your furniture and it will never need repainting. In the western part of this State, it is being applied to houses and barns as soon as they are built, before they are painted at all. What is the result? The buildings thus treated never look old. The boards and shingles never change color. The nails in them never rust. The roofs never leak.

"Still, ladies and gentlemen, I have not yet begun to tell all the marvels of which this invaluable fluid is capable. The tedious and old-fashioned process of washing clothes

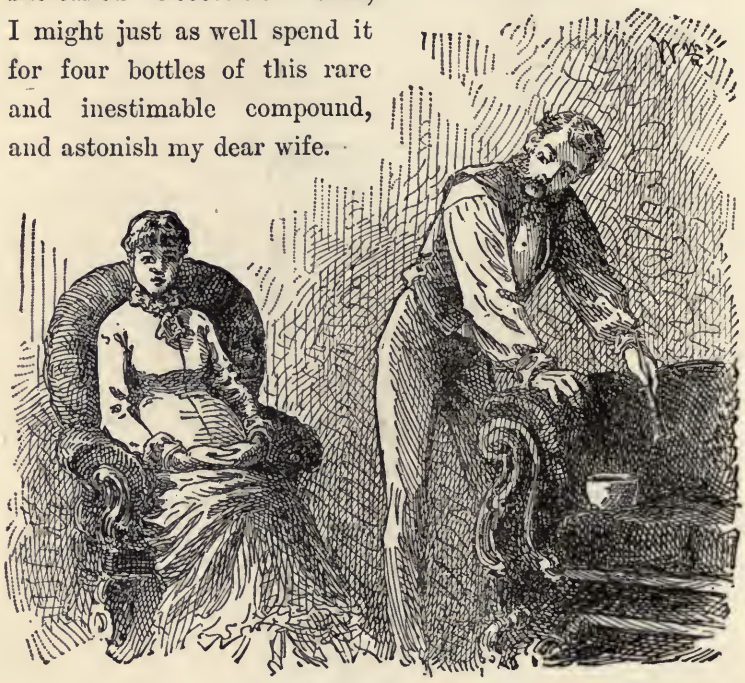
is made entirely unnecessary by the use of this Glazing Fluid. A man may work on a farm all the week, and on Saturday night while on his way to his happy family, stop at the brook and renovate his own garments in two or three minutes so they will be ready for Sunday.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, you will naturally conclude that we do not sell this transcendent article for less than one

SATURDAY NIGHT BATH.

hundred dollars a bottle. It would be equivalent to giving it away, even if that were the price. In every bottle there is the saving of a fortune; yet for the sake of introducing this undisguised blessing to the citizens of New York, I shall sell it for a short time only, at the insignificant rate of two dollars and fifty cents a bottle."

The idea struck me that I would get a bottle. The idea grew on me. I might never have another opportunity to purchase it for a price so near to nothing. I would get two bottles, three bottles. Come to think of it, I had just received ten dollars on account of *The Farmer's Guide*, and although I had intended to give it to Augusta to buy what she called "necessities" with, I might just as well spend it for four bottles of this rare and inestimable compound, and astonish my dear wife.



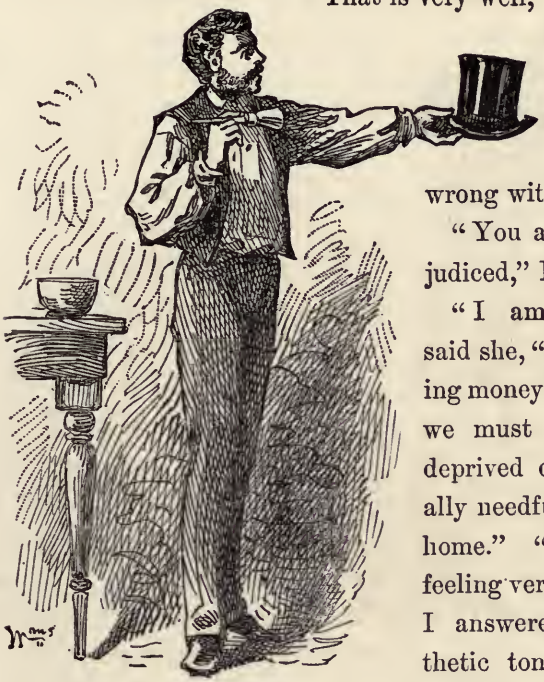
SHE NEEDED THE PEDDLER.

So I emptied my purse and closed the bargain.

The effect on Augusta was considerable, although not exactly in accordance with what I had fondly anticipated. I utterly failed to inspire her breast with the needful enthusiasm concerning the unsurpassed merits of my new investment. She needed the peddler himself to talk to her. I

believe he could have moved and melted the snow-bank in her soul.

However, I succeeded at last in interesting her. I showed her how cloth could be glazed and made perfectly waterproof by a single application of the fluid.



ARTISTIC WORK.

"That is very well," said she, "as far as it goes, but you will find that there is something wrong with the stuff."

"You are blindly prejudiced," I replied.

"I am prejudiced," said she, "against spending money foolishly when we must be constantly deprived of what is really needful to a decent home." "You are not feeling very well to-day," I answered in sympathetic tones, as I continued plying the brush while I glazed the hair-cloth sofa so that it might be washed.

Augusta had a spell of golden silence, which gave me plenty of time to bring out my new silk hat and smear it all over, inside and out, with the peerless fluid.

I repented directly after it was done, for it looked like a veritable Russia-iron stove-pipe. But I consoled myself with the thought that it would shed water and would never have to be pressed or cleaned.

That evening I put on the hat and went to Cooper Institute where I was engaged to deliver a lecture on *Cucumbers* before the *Farmers' Club.* Arriving at the audience-room a little late, I hurried in, and did not attempt to remove my hat until I had reached the rostrum. The word "attempt" is very appropriate, for that hat stuck fast to the hairs of my head. I pulled at it until the rim was broken, and large bunches of hair were loosened at the roots, and my face was red with wrath, but all in vain.

RED WITH WRATH.

Then I began to lecture on the cool and refreshing subject of *Cucumbers*, with my hat on; but somehow the audience was perverse and gave far more attention to my head-covering than to my soul-stirring utterances.

At last, the presiding officer was so discourteous as to interrupt me, and to ask aloud if I had not forgotten the usual respect which a lecturer is in bounden duty to manifest toward his hearers.

My first impulse was to explain the matter; but I dreaded more than all things else, the uproarious laughter which those lusty farmers would pour forth; and, besides, I was afraid

that the explanation might lower me in their favorable opinions, and thereby seriously affect the subscription list of the *Farmer's Guide.*

So I begged the president to allow me to present my apologies to the intelligent audience, which I did in these truthful words:

THE SADDEST MAN IN NEW YORK.

"Gentlemen, I am fully aware that it is a great breach of etiquette for me to appear before so refined an audience as this with my head covered. No one feels more keenly the deep humiliation of that breach than I, myself. Nothing but stern necessity compels me to submit to it. But you must believe me, gentlemen, when I assure you positively that so long as I remain under the orders of my present

physician it will be absolutely impossible for me to remove my hat. And I don't want to be slandered," I added hotly, as I heard one man tell another, that probably I had contracted a humor in my scalp.

"Did n't you notice how excited he got trying to scratch his head when he came in?" inquired another in a hoarse whisper, which sounded to me almost as loud as a steam-whistle.

AROUSING THE INMATES.

Then there was whispering and snickering all through the audience. How could I do justice to *cucumbers* under such circumstances? I was cast-down. I closed my lecture abruptly and started for home, the saddest man in New York.

This, I soliloquized, "is nothing more nor less than my unhappy fate, my miserable luck; for how could I have foreseen that the Glazing Fluid would, under the influence of heat, act as a strong glue. The peddler never said a word about its getting terribly adhesive when warmed."

Reaching home, I was compelled to make use of the door-bell, for Mrs. Berkeley had somehow become possessed of

the absurd notion that it would be better for her to retain my night-key and admit me herself.

This arrangement was very unsatisfactory to me, especially as she was accustomed to fall asleep in her chair, or on the sofa, and it was no easy task to awaken her.

On this particular occasion, she must have been sleeping pretty soundly, for it was not until I had pulled the door-bell knob half-way down the door-steps that I received any response from within. When it did come, however, it was something terrible. Augusta was evidently in trouble. I heard her calling for help, which agonized me because I could not fly to her rescue. Perhaps she is dreaming, I thought. I called to her at the top of my voice to tell me what was the matter.

"I don't know," said she, "something is holding me down to the sofa."

In an instant the truth flashed across my mind. She had been lying on the sofa, and that diabolical Glazing Fluid was holding her down with a grip that could not be loosened.

"Come and let me in," I said, simply because I could not think of anything else to say.

"I am held fast from head to foot," she responded, and then continued to talk, but I could not make out a word she said.

Perhaps it is just as well that I could not, for she had thought about the Glazing Fluid, and was expressing her opinion about it, and about me.

"Can't you bring the sofa on your back and let me in?" I demanded.

The silence which followed became painful. So was the cold, night air. Finally I could endure the situation no longer. I broke through a window and entered the house.

The falling glass woke up a policeman, and he came in great haste to arrest me for house-breaking. I had no great difficulty, though, in explaining things to his entire satisfaction. The real difficulty began when I turned my attention to my wife. She was in straightened circumstances, and much cast down. Nothing but a pair of shears could bring her

CAUGHT IN THE ACT.

relief. When I had finished using the instrument her dress was hopelessly ruined.

To Augusta's unspeakable disgust, I went to bed that night with my Sunday hat on.

The last thing I heard her say was:

"I told you so!"

The end was not yet, however. One day my wife took it

into her head to see what *she* could do with that Glazing Fluid.

She suspected Christine of entertaining a beau in the kitchen at unseasonable hours of the night, and of using up more oil than our circumstances would justify.

Christine made three denials: First, she hadn't any beau. Second, he never stayed late. Third, the light was always turned down so low that no oil was consumed.

MRS. BERKELEY RELIEVED.

Mrs. Berkeley had put her foot down against kitchen courtship, and she was determined now that her foot should be respected.

Without consulting me, or letting me into the secret, as a faithful wife should have done, she took the skirt of Christine's evening dress and carefully prepared it with Prof. Edom's mixture.

That very evening after tea, and while Christine was putting away the dishes, I happened to stroll into the kitchen, as I often did, it being a comfortable place in cold weather, and politely asked the comely girl if anything was needed in the culinary department.

"Nothing special," she replied, "only I would like to have the curtain roller fixed so I can pull down the curtain, because the family across the area are always looking in here to see what they can discover."

I recognized the wisdom of this suggestion, and at once got the step-ladder, and held it while Christine mounted it in order to repair the roller.

Just as she had reached the top, one of the hinges broke, and the ladder suddenly collapsed, causing the girl to come down with sweeping effect. Somehow, I was knocked over, and, in trying to get up, I discovered that the terrified and fainting girl was leaning against me for support.

I felt that I was in some measure responsible for her fall, and it was clearly my duty not to drop her on the floor.

Her fainting spell was of somewhat longer duration than I had expected, and, meanwhile, all unknown to me, that Glazing Fluid on the woman's dress was doing its work.

After awhile, just as the fainting spell was over, we heard Augusta approaching. Christine and I undertook to move apart only to discover that we were bound fast to each other by the skirt of her dress and the tail of my coat. Mrs. Berkeley entered the room just at the moment when we were making the most desperate efforts to free ourselves.

I knew that I should be obliged to say a great deal in order to explain the situation satisfactorily to my wife, but for the life of me, I could not decide what to say first; so I simply stammered and blushed.

Christine also stammered and blushed, which conduct made matters no better.

"Leave this house instantly!" demanded Augusta, in stern accents, addressing herself to the trembling girl.

How she could leave, right off, without taking me with

BUSINESS IN THE KITCHEN.

her, is a problem that Augusta had not stopped to solve; but after much trouble, and the final cutting of one of the garments, we were separated—Christine and I—and then my wife and I had a quiet little talk of four or five hours in length.

The case was not nearly so hard to manage as I had feared. I told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and the result was that Augusta confessed that she believed every word I said, and had not for an instant lost any confidence in me. The inexplicable thing is, though, she could not forgive Christine. From that day forth she never had a kind word or look for the poor girl, who became a victim to circumstances.

So are we all, victims. When two men can meet and exchange characters, as they would swap hats, I will believe in the wonderful potency of free will. Some one says, "Character is very much a matter of health." It is very much a matter of ten thousand surroundings,—including step-mothers, step-ladders, and patent glue.

It is objected that all punishment is unjust unless man is complete master of himself. Why then is not all suffering unjust when it is inflicted on innocent children and born blunderheads? If punishment is simply vindictive, having sole reference to what one has committed, it is unjust; but if it is Heaven's means of fitting the soul for a higher life, and if it looks only to the future, we have no right to complain. Neither has Christine, poor girl!

CHAPTER X.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES.

CHRISTINE went away from us before a great while.

A day or two afterward, we received a note from Mr. Jewell, informing us that his brother's wife had just died, leaving an infant which needed immediate care, and asking us if we would take charge of it until such time as its father could make other arrangements.

"Certainly we will," I said to Augusta.

"For certain reasons, I think we had better not," replied Augusta. "We are in no proper condition to take extra burdens upon ourselves, and we could not do justice to the child's bringing up."

"Nobody could bring it up better," I insisted.

But Augusta remained firm, although we had a long, quiet talk on the subject. At last, I told her that I would take it, even without her consent, and that it should be *my* baby.

"In that case," said she, "you will have sole care of it, night and day. You will feed, wash, and dress it, stop its crying, rock it to sleep, give it medicine when sick, keep it tidy, attend to its clothing, and do the one thousand other things which its comfort and safety will constantly require."

I quailed.

"I suppose you think you would be doing your duty as a faithful wife, in putting all that responsibility on your husband?"

"I think," she replied, "that any husband who would bring a baby into the house against all reasonable protests would not deserve a faithful wife."

I quailed again. But fortune came to my relief. An event occurred which accomplished more than argument. The next mail brought a letter from Chicago, saying that my wife's sister had just died, leaving a little girl two years old, not only motherless, but fatherless.

Augusta had a long spell of crying, during which I made every effort to soothe her.

"Your dear sister is better off," I said. "She will not be sick any more, nor have any more pain; for, as the Good Book says, 'the *old* thing has passed away, and everything has become new.'"

Then I kissed her; but she neglected to show that little favor to me in return.

The first thing she said was, "August, it is my duty to send for that little orphan girl; for there is no one else whose plainer duty it is to stand in the place of her own devoted mother."

"What definite action do you propose to take in that quarter?" I asked, with some austerity of manner.

"I shall telegraph at once," she answered, "that I will take the child."

"Umph!" exclaimed I, pretending to be never so good-natured. "When did the unfortunate husbands who inhabit this glorious land of liberty lose the poor right of being consulted in the important business of adopting a girl baby?"

"Oh, I knew you would not object," said she, "and I intended to consult you, all the time."

"I don't want to be consulted all the time, and therefore I will say, most emphatically and at once, that I do object."

Augusta was astonished.

"Object to taking my dear departed sister's sweet little orphan?" she exclaimed.

"Most decidedly," I replied.

"Why, August, I never knew you to act so contrary before."

"I learned it from you."

"What have I done to offend you?" she inquired, with a pained expression.

"You would not let me have the little Jewell baby."

"August, do you really want that child?"

"Certainly I do. Did not Mr. Jewell rescue me from a terrible death, and restore me to your waiting arms? Have you lost all sense of gratitude, that now you refuse to comply with his most simple request?"

"You are right, August. I was too thoughtless. We will take the helpless infant, and do the very best we can by it."

"And your sister's sweet little babe shall come and keep it company," I responded joyfully.

Thus did we compromise our differences; and my wife paid up all the kisses she owed me, and more too.

Both babies came.

Weeks passed.

Just here I ought to begin a new chapter, but I can't wait. I must tell it now.

Twins!

A fact.

Ours!

Will wonders never cease?

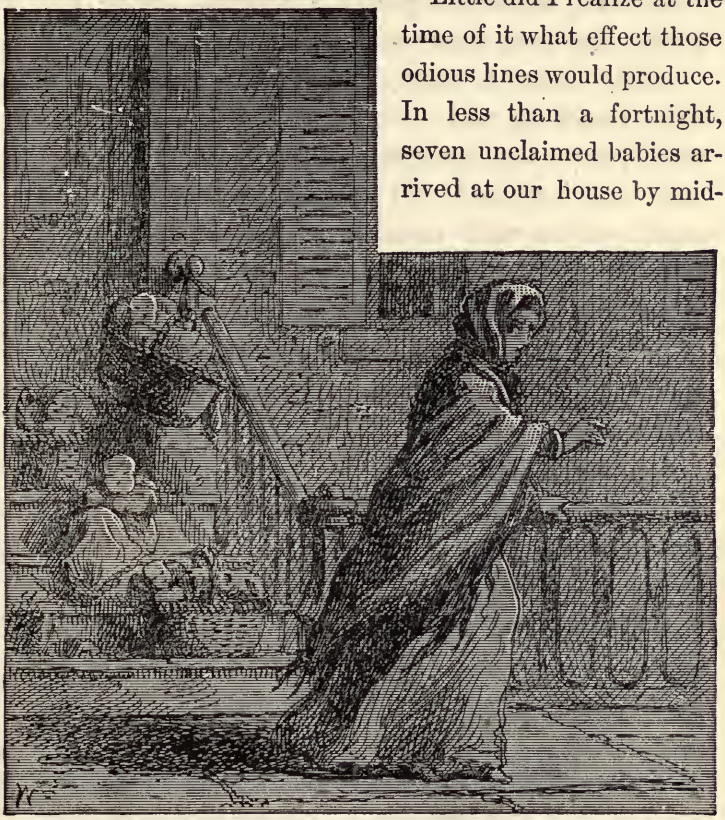
"I suppose," said the doctor, as he broke the news to me as gently as possible, "that, in view of the responsibilities

"THERE'S TWO OF 'EM!"

you had already assumed, *one* additional child would have been regarded as quite sufficient."

"Yes," said I, "but I assure you, doctor, I am happily disappointed, rather than otherwise. I am exceedingly fond of children."

Shortly after this, a paragraph appeared in a rival newspaper, saying that the editor of *The Farmer's Guide* had founded an infant asylum at No. — Bleeker street, where he would gladly receive any baby that might be sent to him.



NO. — BLEEKER STREET.

Little did I realize at the time of it what effect those odious lines would produce. In less than a fortnight, seven unclaimed babies arrived at our house by midnight carriers, who left no bill of express charges. Five of these we sent to a Home for Infants, but the other two were retained, because small sums of money had been left with them for their support.

"We are in great need of this money," said I to Augusta, "and as the two babies who brought it are both very bright and healthy in appearance, I advise keeping them, by all means."

At first, Augusta impulsively objected, saying that we already had more family than we could support.

"But," argued I, "many a time I have heard a boarding-house keeper say that if she had to keep boarders at all, she would just as soon have two or three more as two or three less. And any cook will tell you that one or two extra mouths at the table make no perceptible difference in the meal-barrel. Moreover, didn't we hear Robert Collyer say, in his lecture on *Clear Grit*, that 'nobody should be afraid of having too many children to provide for, because the good Lord never sends mouths without sending something nice to put into them?'"

Augusta did not seem to be convinced; but as she was not strong enough to argue with me, it was not long before she felt resigned to the logic of my cool, calm level-headedness, and the question was settled.

That afternoon, I met my friend Jewell on the street, and he inquired anxiously after his brother's motherless child.

"Oh," said I, "we have six."

"Six what?" he inquired.

"Six children, all babies,—four boys and two girls, or else four girls and two boys. I am not sure which."

Jewell was astonished.

I love children dearly, and imagine I know just how to train them so that when they grow up they will not depart from it. I realize that pretty much everything which is to be done in behalf of the man must be executed while he is a boy.

The Andes have been raised up from an ocean-bed, for sea-shells are found on them at an elevation of fourteen thousand feet. So it is with the human being. He may rise to Alpine heights, but he must take with him the shells, beautiful or otherwise, of his early existence. The geologist reads earth's childhood in fossil rocks. In the brain of every adult are the fossil influences of babyhood.

CHAPTER XI.

SUPPLIES FOR THE FAMILY.

AS soon as Augusta was well enough to sit up, she and the nurse put their heads together and made out a list of articles that were immediately needed in the house. Never had I so fully realized that I was a man of family as when I looked at that list. It was as long as the moral code.

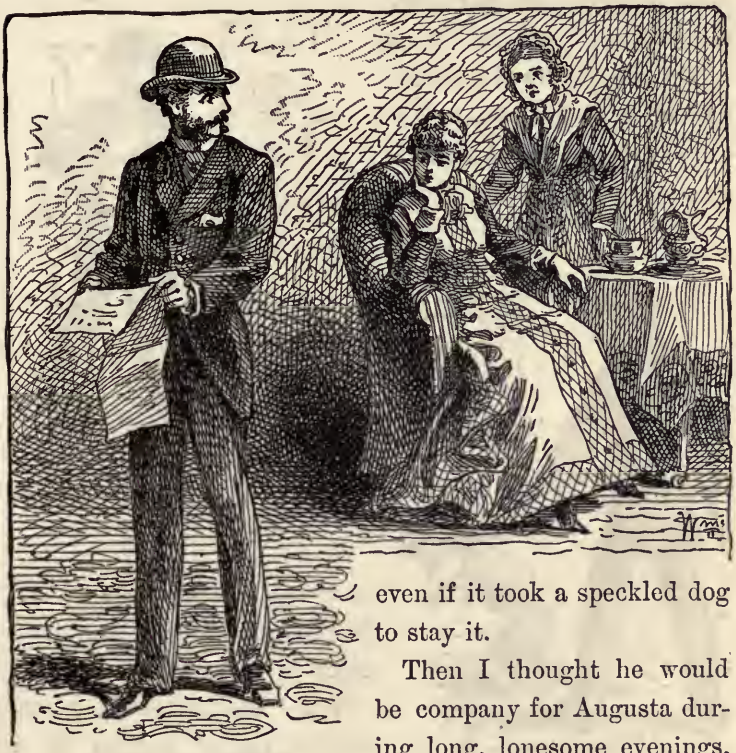
"I beg of you," pleaded Augusta, as I left the door, "that you will not make any foolish bargains, for it will require the closest figuring to make the money hold out until the necessary purchases are made."

"I hope," said I, impetuously, "that you do not regard me as one of the six babies, that you deem it needful to give me this advice. I may be a little backward in some things, such as far-fetched theories concerning the origin of man and justification through faith; but when it comes to the practical business of doing a little trading, I do not thank any one for intimating that I am a horse-block."

Augusta said no more. She saw the force of my remarks.

Little did I think as I shut the door and went proudly forth on my mission, that unfortuitous circumstances would so conspire against all my preconceived purposes that I should come home a few hours later with a speckled dog, a pair of "diamond" ear-rings, and little else.

I was persuaded to buy the dog because I came to believe I needed him for protection against other people's blessings, of whom such is the kingdom of heaven. I was determined that the tide of immigration which had undertaken to flood me with a mixed multitude of infants should be stayed,



GOING ON A MISSION.

even if it took a speckled dog to stay it.

Then I thought he would be company for Augusta during long, lonesome evenings, when I should be detained by business at the office. I expected nothing but that she would go into ecstasies over him, and shower us both with caresses, the minute she should set eyes on him.

He looked lank and hungry, so the first thing I did when I had paid the seven dollars and a half purchase-money for which he was sacrificed, was to stop at a meat market and

get him twenty-five cents worth of porter-house steak. He seemed very grateful for this, and it put new life into his wagging fixture.

My next thought was to regain my watch, which I had been obliged to leave at a pawn-shop. The time in which it could be redeemed was nearly out, and I knew the babies would need it, for the doctor had already left orders for some of them to take medicine every half-hour, not knowing that we were out of half-hours, having no time-piece to make them with.

STRIVING FOR NEW LIFE.

The hooked-nosed pawnbroker turned out to be a first-class fraud. He had taken the new and excellent works from my watch-case and put old and worthless ones in their place. Although I knew this to be so I had no legal way of proving it, and therefore he had me in his power.

I threatened to prosecute him, but he only laughed me in the face. I made up my mind then and there, that I would

get even with him by any means, fair or unfair, that human ingenuity could devise.

While I stood parleying with him, a gentleman entered the shop and became interested in our conversation.

After a while he drew me aside and whispered in my ear: "Sir, I am a stranger to you, but, begging your pardon, I will venture to give you a little advice. Let that sharper alone. I know him of old. He will cheat any man blind who deals with him."

"But he has stolen my watch," said I.

"Is it entirely gone?" inquired the stranger.

"No, I have the same cases back again."

"Then," said he, "you are extremely lucky, and ought to thank your stars you have saved so much."

"I am bound to get even with him," I replied, my voice tremulous with indignation.

"You will do better to let that job out," remarked the stranger. "Never a victim yet has succeeded in getting even with him. The more one attempts it the nearer the poor-house one gets. Of course you can do as you think best," he added, after a pause, "but if you should make the attempt and fail, you will not think the less of me for having intruded on your good-nature to the extent of warning you of your danger."

"Certainly not," I replied. "You have acted the perfect gentleman. You must excuse me, however, if I suggest that there is a certain quality in my nature of which you are pardonably ignorant. I will not be imposed on by any one. I am not a marine, that I should be made a dupe of by land-sharks. No, no; mark my words! I will get even with this miscreant."

He looked at me sorrowfully, and we both turned to leave

the shop. On the way to the door he stopped before a glass show-case, and called my attention to some precious stones exposed for sale.

"Now look here," said he. "As an example of the manner in which this man swindles the public, here are these so-called diamonds. I happen to be a connossieur in this class of goods. I have been an importer of diamonds for fifteen years, and know the genuine from the spurious at a glance. Those ear-rings that are marked thirty-five dollars, are nothing but composition, and worth just three dollars. That pair marked fifty-four dollars are Scotch pebbles, and could be bought of any respectable dealer for seven dollars."

"What about those?" I inquired, pointing to a pair of brilliants marked four hundred dollars.

"Those," answered my informer, "are real diamonds, and would be worth all that is asked for them if it were not that they have some little flaws, which, however, might never be detected except with a magnifying glass. As it is, they are not worth over a hundred and fifty dollars. At Tiffany's they would be put on the market at a hundred and seventy-five. Marking them at four hundred is decidedly cheeky, and requires a cast-iron conscience. But some day a conceited fellow, who thinks he knows all about Jewing, and that nobody can get up early enough in the morning to get ahead of him, will come in and offer two hundred dollars for those stones. After the broker has pooh-poohed and whined and cried and lied for about half an hour, he will put on a most dejected look, and tell the conceited fellow that, although two hundred dollars is far below their cost, as can be seen by examining the bill of lading, yet, considering that the broker's wife is sick, and the doctor has

ordered her to be sent to the Springs, the brilliants must go.

"Then the conceited fellow will laugh in his sleeve, pat himself on the back, and say, 'What a smart boy am I!'

"Don't trade at this shop," concluded the stranger; "that is my advice. Good morning." He turned to go, when

"LOOK HERE?"

his eye fell on a little hole in the show-case, caused by one of the settings of glass having had its corner broken off.

"Do you know," said he, "that a dishonest person might take advantage of that defect to defraud this broker?"

"How so?" I inquired. "The hole is neither large

enough for a person's hand to be thrust in, nor for any of the jewelry to be taken out."

"True," said he, "but look here."

So saying, he picked up a piece of wire which chanced to be lying on the counter, and running it through the hole in the show-case, dexterously exchanged the tags marked respectively thirty-five dollars and four hundred dollars, so that the genuine diamonds were now offered at the figures which had stood for the artificial. He then laughed in a merry way at the joke he had executed, and after politely bidding me good-day again, left the store.

Suddenly a great temptation seized me. It grew on me. I had vowed vengeance on the man who had stolen my watch. Now was my opportunity. I would tell no falsehood, I would not purloin, I would not violate any statutory law, or break any commandment of Scripture. I would simply make a purchase, and pay the price demanded.

The broker, who, all this while had been very busy at his desk in the other end of the store, now came forward, and in a most obsequious manner inquired if there was anything he could do for me.

"Do you sell everything at the price marked on its tag?" I asked, trying to look innocent, while my heart was beating like a blacksmith's sledge. Perhaps it was ashamed of me and was trying to make its escape.

"Yes, sir; we have but one price, and that is plainly put down," answered the pawn-broker.

"Will you let me look at those diamonds marked thirty-five dollars?" said I, my voice acting as though it had not been moistened for a week.

"Elegant gems, and worth a good deal more money!" exclaimed he, taking out the ear-rings which had formerly been marked four hundred dollars.

"What is the lowest I can have them for, and close the bargain instantly?" I demanded, beginning to feel as hot as though the fires prepared for my lost soul had just been replenished with an extra barrel of pitch.

"Do you see those figures?" curtly replied the broker. "Do you think I placed them there for amusement? They mean that I will sell those valuable diamond ear-rings for just thirty-five dollars; not one cent more, and not one cent less. Take them if you want them; if you don't, leave them; it is all the same to me." And he was just replacing them in the case when I cried out:

"I'll take them! Here is your money."

I hurried out of the store as though pursued by a flaming sword.

If any one thinks I was happy he has made a miscalculation. I did n't even dare to look my speckled dog in the face. I was afraid of his honest bark.

In analyzing my conflicting emotions I discovered that I was very *proud* of what I had accomplished, and that out of that pride came a kind of satisfaction. I had done what my adviser, the stranger, assured me could not be done, and that was worth something. It tickled my vanity.

Still, there was something wrong lying around loose in my better self, and as near as I could judge, it was about the size of a millstone, and about as rampant as a mad bull.

My dog began to pull furiously on the cord by which I was leading him. At first I thought he was anxious to go back to his former master; but then I knew this could not be his purpose for he was pointing in an opposite direction. I had often read of dogs being possessed of wonderful instinct or reason, even to the extent of leading their owners to the

discovery of lost treasure; so, to satisfy my curiosity, I let him take me according to his own sweet will.

The place to which he brought me, with no unnecessary delay, was the meat market, where I had purchased the steak for him but a short time previous. I admired his sagaciousness so much that I ordered a half dozen pork

HIS OWN SWEET WILL.

chops, which he gulped down before I could get them paid for. I began to surmise that my speckled cur was blessed with a good appetite. This, I consoled myself, would save the expense of spring bitters.

Passing by Tiffany's, it occurred to me that I would just run in and get an official statement of the value of my earrings.

The clerk to whom I handed them for inspection, put a magnifying glass to his eye, looked at them for an instant, and remarked:

"I hope, sir, you are not one of the innocents!"

"I do not feel particularly innocent," said I.

THE LATEST TRICK.

"Have you heard of the latest trick which the confidence men are playing?"

"No," I replied, "but I have not lived in large cities all my life not to know a confidence man when I see him, no matter what his trick is."

"Oh, of course it catches nobody but greenhorns from

the country, but you would be surprised to know how many victims there are. They come in here every day with just this kind of jewelry and ask me to examine it. Sometimes they go away swearing mad when I tell them it is bogus and not worth taking home."

"How is the trick managed?" I inquired, trying to conceal my emotions.

"Very cleverly," answered the clerk. "The shop-keeper has a confederate, who comes in at the opportune moment and pretends to hold the shop-keeper in supreme contempt. In a disinterested sort of way he urges you not to trade in that store. He secures your confidence. I mean the confidence of the verdant countryman whom he intends to victimize, and then ——"

"Give me those ear-rings!" I demanded angrily. "I am going home."

As the clerk handed them to me, I observed a knowing look lighting up his countenance and a diabolical smile playing about his open mouth.

I knew he saw through me, and I felt cheap—cheaper than the ear-rings.

On the way home my speckled dog took it into his head to haul off again toward the meat-shop. It cost me a pang or two to deny him. If I had had any money left, nothing would have given me greater satisfaction than to have bought him a fresh ham, a shoulder of mutton, a leg of veal, or a nice string of sausages. I liked my dog, and I have every reason to think he liked me, even to the extent of over-estimating me. The value at which I held myself grew less and less as I approached home.

Meeting my wife was a painful ordeal.

As I entered the sick chamber, dragging my speckled cur

after me, Augusta turned toward me with a wearied look, but with eyes full of love, and said:

"O! August, I am so glad you have come. Ask the nurse if she will be kind enough to put the things you have bought into the pantry and then set the table for dinner. You must be hungry. Come and stay by me a little while.

AUGUSTA'S RECEPTION.

I don't feel so well to-day. The doctor says I have taken a little cold, and he is alarmed about my fever. Your hand feels so cool and nice on my forehead. You are a dear good man. Who lent you that big hungry-looking dog? Please don't take him home yet. I want you to stay with me. I have felt so lonesome to-day, and I love you so much. Let your face nestle right against mine now while you tell me all

about your shopping and how you managed to make the money hold out. You don't know how sorry I feel for you when I think of you having to be deprived of so many things you want. I must have been very weak and nervous to-day, for I cried real hard remembering all your struggles and disappointments; and then I prayed for you, and I thanked the dear Father in Heaven that you are such a good man, so upright and honorable and conscientious, and I asked him to make me more deserving—"

COALS OF FIRE.

"Augusta," I exclaimed, jumping up and turning my face away to hide the tears which I could no longer force back. "I can't endure this another minute! I rather you would curse me as I deserve than to talk this way!"

"Have I offended you?" she asked in a tone of genuine alarm? "You must forgive me August. I did not mean to hurt your feelings—truly I did not, but I am so careless; I am always saying something I ought not to."

"Augusta!" I cried, and then my voice became choked and I could not give utterance to another word.

She saw that I was overcome with grief, and so, making a great effort to be cheerful, she said:

"August, you must not think I am going to die. As soon as this fever passes I shall be a great deal better. You know what a strong will I have, and I am going to will myself to get well,—even for your sake."

"Thank you," said I, "and for your sake, I am going to try to be more worthy of the best woman in the world."

GETTING RID OF A BURDEN.

I didn't give her any description of my latest commercial transactions, for I feared the doctor might not approve of it. But I did the best I could toward repairing the mischief of the day. Going into the kitchen I cornered the nurse and begged of her, for dear pity's sake, to lend me

some money for a few days till I could get straightened out. She emptied her purse into my hands! "You have been extremely faithful to my wife and the babies," said I to her, "and you must now permit me to make you a little present as a token of my appreciation of your services."

I then gave her the diamond ear-rings which were weighing so heavily on my conscience, but more especially on my pride.

She was astonished.

"O, no," said I, "they are not so valuable as you seem to suppose; they are made of paste and set in rolled gold. However, if you are very careful and don't wear them, they will keep their lustre for many years."

I went back to my wife feeling a sense of relief.

GOING TO HIS LONG HOME.

"Augusta," said I, "this speckled dog appears to be getting hungry. If you will excuse me for a few minutes I guess I will take him home."

I did take him—to his long home, and when I returned I had ordered all the groceries and things that the nurse's money could pay for.

I wished that I was a better Christian! It actually worried me to think that I could not love that pawnbroker. Willingly would I have gone to heaven with the speckled dog—but not with him.

Is it any wonder that religion is hard to practice? We are required to love our enemies and abhor their sins. This is contrary to all human experience. The law of association is very strong. In our thought, things in relationship possess each other's quality. Who can dissociate coffin and corpse? Who can forget the base uses to which a cooking utensil may have been put, even though it has been thoroughly cleaned?

Who cares to sleep in the bed of a *felo-de-se?* Who could use a hangman's rope for a plaything? Yet, in spite of this overwhelming instinct of human nature, Christianity would have us love a man while hating all the uses to which he puts himself. Augusta says this is right. Yet *she* cannot even love Christine. In that regard I am nearer the kingdom of righteousness than she.

After all, this law of association is just what we need. If it gets us into the difficulty it can also get us out. We have only to associate the man with his divine origin and everlasting destiny, and we shall then love him in accordance with the requirements.

CHAPTER XII.

MEASLES.

THEY struck the family just as the hot weather came on. The six babies all had them night and day, but principally at night. During the day I stayed at the office.

NIGHT WORK.

For seven long, wearisome, painful, never-to-be-forgotten weeks, my regular sleep was constantly broken in upon by the children's complaints. There was scarcely a night that I could get over eight hours of unbroken rest. I have a faint impression that Augusta was worse off than I, but I never have told her so. Why it is that I am apt to neglect such little courtesies is more than I can possibly comprehend.

Just as our herculean efforts and anxieties had been rewarded by the verdict of the physician that the babies were out of danger, I myself was struck down with all the measles that were left in the neighborhood.

It would have been just my luck to have taken the disease the next day after I was born, and to have died in my sins at that time; but, through some oversight, I had been reserved for a later day.

I was sick.

The reader must inflate these little words with all the meaning that his own most dreadful experience can furnish.

For two weeks I hung suspended by a single hair over the yawning gulf of—but I must not get theological—during which time, Augusta gave me the divine ministry of her sweet affection and indefatigable devotion.

Would you believe that such a woman would grow hard-hearted at last?

She did.

It was when I had become convalescent. I had lost my appetite, but I had found another. It must have been Jumbo's, or the speckled dog's. There was nothing that I did not want to eat, and there was nothing except porridge, and soup, and toast, and eggs, and ripe fruit, that my wife would permit me to have.

She had a ridiculous superstition, inherited from her mother, that hearty eating would bring on a relapse.

An opportunity offered for me to make the attempt to disabuse her usually good judgment of that ancient delusion.

A neighbor had dropped in to see how I was getting on, and Augusta had invited her to stay to dinner. They were both in the kitchen waiting for the tea to steep. The table was set. Noiselessly I glided from my couch, and took an

inventory of the fare. What struck me as the most savory dish of all was the meat. There were two or three pounds of cold boiled ham just waiting to be consumed. How my stomach yearned for it! I laid hold of it eagerly. In another instant I should have proceeded to gratify my inner cravings; but, for some reason, I hesitated. The man that hesitates is—saved. Therein he differs from woman.

EXPERIMENTING.

I will be a man, thought I. Perhaps, after all, Augusta is right, but, nevertheless, it would furnish me with a month's comfort to convince her otherwise.

A feasible scheme suggested itself. The next minute I had opened a bandbox, and concealed the cold ham under my wife's Sunday bonnet, after which I returned to my couch to await developments.

The women came in, my wife smiling benignantly as she bore the steaming teapot.

"You must excuse me," said she to Mrs. Losson, "for not having a more presentable dinner. We have been so upset with sickness that my housework has been sadly neglected."

"How are you feeling to-day?" inquired Mrs. Losson, coming to the lounge whereon I was stretched.

"Thank you, Mrs. Losson," I replied, "I am at least a thousand per cent. better than I was half an hour ago."

"Victuals, marm! I was on the ragged edge of starvation, and should speedily have gasped my last gasp had I not dragged my exhausted frame to the dinner-table, and supplied my wasted powers with their proper nourishment."

"Where in the world is that ham?" exclaimed my wife, trying to look in twelve different directions at once.

"This is all I have left of it," I replied, holding up a jagged little piece, which I had reserved especially for the occasion.

Augusta turned pale.

"Don't be alarmed," said I, "for I am feeling ever so much better than I felt a while ago. Haven't I told you all along that I needed substantial food? You must admit now that your theory was wrong. There was a time when all the old ladies in the land believed that every sick person should be blistered, and bled, and tortured, while every convalescent patient should be kept on a light diet till he was hungry enough to eat a barn door. But, Augusta, science has advanced, and it pains me to think that a woman of your native sense should still cling to any of the mouldy conceits of the dark ages. That was very nice ham, my dear, very nice indeed. Won't you give me a plate of plum-pudding for dessert?"

Augusta was too much agitated to reply.

She and Mrs. Losson put their heads together, and held a few minutes excited conversation, during which I was serenely smiling in the sleeve of my dressing-gown.

Mrs. Losson went away, but soon returned.

Augusta came to my side, and in pleading tones, said, "August, will you do one thing to please me?"

HAM HUNTERS.

"Most assuredly," I replied, my conscience giving a twitch or two.

"Then take this powder in a glass of water."

I took it.

Oh, horrors! It was a most powerful emetic.

I had nothing particular to throw up except my legs; but the emetic was determined to do its mission all the same. My stomach, being a little weak from long abstinence, had

A RUINED BONNET.

not a very firm grip on its surroundings, and it seemed every minute as though its tackling would break, and that I should lose it.

At this crisis the doctor arrived, having been notified by Mrs. Losson when she went for the emetic.

"He is a very sick man," solemnly spoke the physician, feeling of my pulse. "Has the ham come yet?"

"No," replied both women with bated breath.

"I fear it is too heavy to be moved," mournfully spoke the doctor.

I was busy with my sea-sickness, and could not, therefore, observe my wife, or I should have seen the most despairing look on her face which human countenance can endure.

"I shall have to try another dose of *tartara medicus*," continued the doctor.

"No, you don't!" I groaned, making another effort to turn myself inside out. "If it's the ham you are after, just drop your vile emetic into that bandbox, and the ham will appear."

Augusta tore off the cover, and the first thing I heard her say was:

"Mercy on us! My best bonnet is ruined!"

Thus easily could she forget *my* troubles, and pay attention to a mere matter of personal adornment.

How often have I observed the inconsistency of woman!

My recovery was not speedy, for there were many violated laws lying around loose in my physical constitution.

Through all my sickness, I never once prayed to get well. I am too much of a philosopher. Reason teaches me that Nature finds it necessary to adopt the same means in repairing a man that we adopt in repairing a dilapidated house. She tears him all to pieces, and then puts him together as

best she can. Instead of being thankful for this important service, we cry out because of our suffering It is thus of all chastening. Chasten is from *castus*, meaning chaste. Who would not be made chaste? Many a man has to be chased from sin with the chastening rod of love before he can become chaste.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEGLECTED DUTIES.

I AROSE early one morning, and ordered Bridget to get me a good breakfast, as I had an editorial brewing in my brain, and was anxious to go to my office.

"Fath," said she, "an' thar haint nottin in th' house that er blissid man ken ate!"

"How is that?" said I. "Have n't I been bringing stuff home all summer? What 's become of it?"

"Phativer has coom ter this place is cooked an' aten, as I'm an honest woman. Sure, an' it 's not th' loikes of er gintleman of your sthripe to entimate that I wud sthale."

"But there must be enough in the house for breakfast—*anything*, get *anything*. I am in a great hurry."

"'Pon me soul, thar haint nottin in th' hul mansion but er bit er salt an' er doozen aigs."

"A dozen eggs! Why, that 's a breakfast for a king. There is nothing in the world I like better. Cook them at once; and mind," I added, "as she was shuffling toward the kitchen, "that you boil them soft."

This order given, I settled back in an easy chair, and was soon absorbed on my forthcoming editorial, namely: "Why is horse-radish called *horse*-radish, when it neither looks like a horse nor tastes like one?" My intention was to make something of a national reputation, and largely increase the

circulation of my paper by a learned and elaborate treatment of that important subject.

I had been cudgeling my brain over it about half an hour, when I received a telegram from my stomach, suggesting that I had not yet had my breakfast.

"Bridget," I cried, "what *is* the matter?"

"THE DIVIL IS IN TH' AIGS."

"The divil is in th' aigs!" answered that innocent. "I've biled 'em till th' shtove is red-hot, an' they haint soft yit."

"Bring them on, this minute!" I roared.

She brought them on, and I began on them.

"I should judge they are not soft yet," said I, trying vainly to hammer one into fragments. You have boiled

them till they are petrified. Why, they are actually a curi osity. I shall write an editorial on them. I never knew before that protracted and intense heat would produce such a marvelous change in an egg. It's a new discovery."

While thus soliloquizing, my wife appeared on the scene.

"What are you doing with those eggs?" she inquired.

"Trying to eat them, my dear. There is nothing else for breakfast, and I am as hungry as a bear."

"Did I ever?" she exclaimed. "Those are nothing but artificial nest eggs. They are some you got for advertising a china store."

"Augusta," said I, peevishly, "you see to what straits I am driven in order to *hint* to you that you are not the most careful housewife that could be desired. It was your place to have looked after the larder, and to have known that there was nothing in the house that a starving man could digest."

"I did look after the larder," she replied, "and I was not ignorant of its condition."

"So much the worse, since you did not allow your knowledge to have any effect."

"Did you expect me to take the six babies in my arms, and go myself to obtain provisions? Have you not warned me repeatedly not to trust the darlings with nurses?"

"Now you are trying to aggravate me. It was your place to have told me what condition things were in."

"August, I told you at least eight times yesterday that we were out of everything. The last thing I said when you left the house was, 'Please, do not forget the groceries nor the meat.'"

"Perhaps it was the last thing you said; but why do you always give your instructions when I am in a perfect fever

of cogitation over an editorial? Why don't you speak of such things at some other time than when I am just going away in a hurry? If ever I marry again, I will have a woman who has been in the newspaper business. Then she can sympathize with me. She will know that a person can't think of everything at once, and work out four columns of reading matter at the same time. Business before pleasure is a rule which you don't seem to grasp. Try for a minute to put yourself in my place. Twenty or thirty pages of manuscript must be prepared for the next issue. I select a subject, and put it into my brain, where it is surrounded by phosphorus, and pretty soon it takes fire and begins to burn. In course of an hour or two, the flames are raging. All the boys of the fire department in New York City would fail to control them. Just as the mighty conflagration of thought has reached its highest development, a little woman approaches, and carelessly says, 'August, won't you order a pound of dried apples?' I forget the dried apples, of course. It would be beneath the dignity of any purely literary man not to forget them. I should be doing injustice to *The Farmer's Guide* by remembering them. Then comes that same woman, and says, 'August, my dear, you are *so* absent-minded! I *do* wish you would be more thoughtful!'"

Augusta was pained. She began to accuse herself of being a hindrance to me in my profession.

I saw then that I was a wretch. I was always trying to convince my wife that she was in the wrong; yet, whenever I succeeded, and she broke down and confessed, I felt meaner than dirt. Such a victory is not worth what it costs.

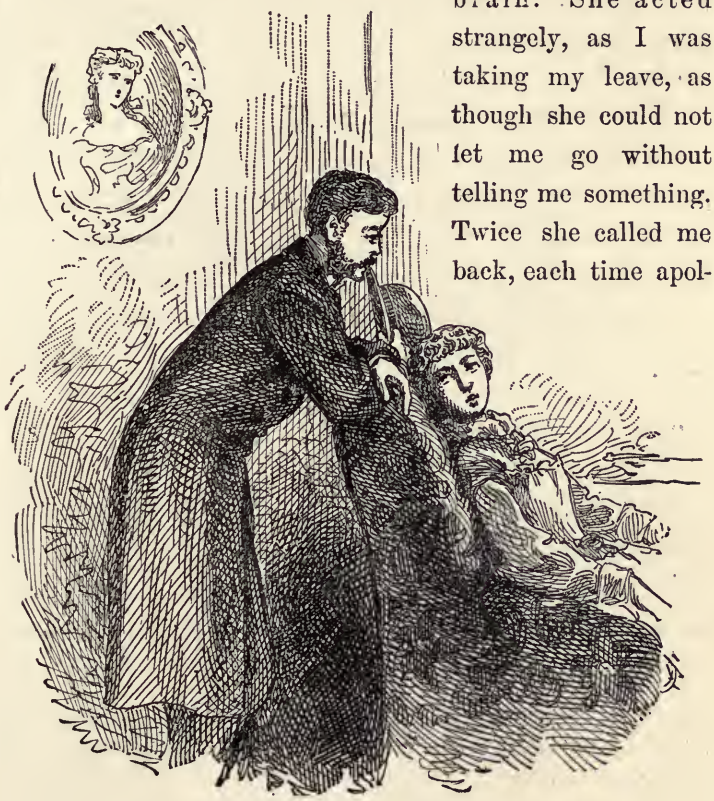
"Augusta," said I, "you are all the world to me, my first, last, and only love."

Then we had a kiss or two for breakfast.

Still, I was hungry.

"I will get my breakfast down town this morning," said I, putting on my hat.

Where Augusta was to get hers never entered my addled brain. She acted strangely, as I was taking my leave, as though she could not let me go without telling me something. Twice she called me back, each time apol-



HER OPPORTUNITY.

ogizing, with the remark, "Oh, it is of no consequence."

"You are troubled," I said, "and I must know the cause, or I shall not be able to do a stroke of work to-day."

Still she hesitated.

"Tell me, darling, what it is," I said, pleadingly.

"August, are you laboring *now* with an editorial?"

"No, dear, my mind has fallen into a great vacant pit—the pit of my stomach."

"Then may I ask you to order something for dinner?"

"Certainly; and I will order something for dinner just as soon as I have been to the restaurant and ordered something for breakfast."

"But is there not danger of your becoming absorbed in your newspaper work as soon as your hunger is appeased?"

"Yes, dear, there is some danger to-day, because I have got to take hold of the great question, 'Why is horse-radish called *horse*-radish, when it does not look like a horse, or taste like one?'"

"Will you let me tie a string around your finger, so that it will remind you that we must have something for dinner?" she inquired.

"Certainly."

She tied the string pretty tight.

I got my breakfast at the first chop-house; and because it cost me over two dollars, I resolved to be economical for a time, and therefore I walked all the way to my office rather than pay five cents horse-car fare. During the jaunt, I got mightily wrought up over the radish question. I had got as far as showing that, in reality, the horse-radish does not shed its coat like a horse, when I felt my finger paining me.

"Oh, yes!" I soliloquized, observing the string, which was doing its work, "I believe wife said something about dinner," and, in an absent-minded sort of way, for I did not want to break the thread of my radish argument, I stepped into a shop and ordered three dozen dressed chickens.

After a while, I forgot the transaction, even if I had

really known anything about it; and when again the finger hurt me, I had just sense enough to order a leg of lamb. At least, I probably intended to say "lamb," for I am very fond of it; but it turned out, on delivery, to be a leg of beef.

By the time I arrived at Newspaper Row, I had fully solved the minor problem, to wit, why the horse likes water,

DOING ITS WORK.

and the horse-radish vinegar; but what other work I had done the while, I had no very clear conception. I don't possess the happy faculty of thinking of two things at once, and applying judgment to both.

I came to my senses later in the day, when I reached home.

"Have you invited a regiment to dinner?" inquired my wife, exhibiting symptoms of alarm.

"Invited nobody," I answered.

"What does this mean?" she asked, as my astonished gaze rested on a prodigious amount of fish and meat, poultry and clams.

"I believe you tied a string around my finger, didn't you, for the purpose of jogging my memory?"

"Yes, August."

"And it strikes me, Augusta, that the string did its work pretty effectually. How does it strike you, my dear?"

My dear was silent.

She has since told me that, while she is forced to admire the great things which I am always performing, she should prize me more highly if I would not be so negligent of little things.

She says that the great roots of a tree absorb no nourishment, and that the plant would soon die were it not for the numberless and almost invisible rootlets which permeate the soil. She means by this, that I ought to be more heedful of the little delicate fibers through which domestic happiness flows into our matrimonial tree.

Perhaps she is right. After all, little things are our only real enemies. There are men who could face a tempest all day who would die if a little draft should squeeze through a window crack, and strike them on the head. Great issues on which national existence depends, questions which affect the destiny of millions, scarcely give us an additional heartbeat, while the trifling breezes of our home, church, or neighborhood almost cause us to give up the ghost.

CHAPTER XIV.

ENTERING SOCIETY.

ANOTHER harvest had been gathered, and the crops were exceedingly fine, owing partly to sun-spots, but mostly to *The Farmer's Guide*.

As a result, my subscription-list grew larger and larger, so much money coming in that I began to feel like an Indian agent, or an absconding cashier. Allow me to mention, for it is a remarkable coincidence, that it was about *this* time when "good society" discovered that Augusta and I were in New York.

One chilly evening in September, I came home from my office to find my wife a little flurried. We had actually received a gilt-edged invitation to a grand dinner party, to be given that very evening by General Cradle and wife at their palatial residence on Fifth Avenue.

"I'll not go a step," said I, "for the invitation comes so late that it is not entitled to any respect, and there is no time to get ready,"

"So I fear," answered Augusta, "but it is all your fault. The invitation is a week old, and it was only by accident that I discovered it, still unopened, among a lot of old letters with which you have been trying to stop up a rat-hole in the bath-room. Such carelessness will be the ruin of us

yet. It might have been a check, or a post-office order. As it is, the case is quite bad enough. This invitation is fraught with great consequences. It was to be our introduction to society. Other invitations would have followed. Your reputation, influence, and perhaps fortune, would have come in quick succession. Now all these things—"

"Were employed to stop up a rat-hole," said I. "But, Augusta, you have shown so clearly what we are to lose by staying away from this party, that I am determined to go. Hurry up, now! Let us get ready, and be off."

"But we shall be late."

"So much the more fashionable."

"We shall be unreasonably late!"

"That will be your fault, Augusta, for I can attend wholly to myself, and be ready in a very few minutes."

"August, you never did such a thing since we were married. You never can dress even for church without calling on me at least half a dozen times to assist you, and I must always look after you, wherever you go."

"I wish you would n't make such wild statements. Now let us both do our best, and get ready. I warn you not to interfere with me. I am not one of the babies, that I must have somebody put on my bib and tucker."

"Very well, August, you shall not be molested, and we will each arrange our own toilet as speedily as possible."

We went to work. Repeatedly I had to check myself in the act of asking Augusta to bring me this or that article; but I finally succeeded in piling everything that I thought I should need for making a complete change of clothing, into four or five heaps, occupying as many chairs, and nearly as many rooms. My purpose was very strong to get ready long before Augusta, and then to amuse myself by asking

her fifteen or twenty times in succession if she knew how late it was getting, and if she was not afraid that the General and his wife would be gone to bed when we got there.

What encouraged me was that all the babies were cross, and every little while Augusta had to stop and quiet one or more of them,—generally more. Then she had to do some

PREPARING FOR COLIC.

sewing on a flounce, arrange a bouquet of artificial flowers, heat a curling-iron, friz her hair, change the buttons on a pair of new shoes, mend two or three rips in a pair of kid gloves, and explain to the nurse what must be done in case any of the babies should get the croup, and what other thing must be done if they should be attacked with colic.

I should have got on finely had it not been for an *idea* that attacked me. The idea was that the next issue of *The Farmer's Guide* should contain a full description of General Cradle's magnificent hospitality, groaning tables, honored guests, etc., etc.

As usual, the idea grew on me. I soon had a great chaos of literary lumber in my head, which I was fated to sort over and arrange, then and there, whether I wanted to or not. From that moment, my hands dressed me without any conscious assistance of the mind. Nevertheless, I hurried, because, having got well started, the mere momentum carried me on, and my haste resulted in success.

I was ready a few seconds before Augusta. I had even put on my new fall overcoat, and buttoned it up to the chin; which I was in the habit of doing when going out in the evening, on account of a sensitive throat, which I dreaded to expose to night air.

"Come, Augusta," exclaimed I, "are n't you ready yet? I have waited for you until my patience is entirely exhausted. Do try and hurry a little, or Mrs. Cradle will have her finery all put away for the night before you get yours on."

We ordered a carriage, and were off.

The guests were just sitting down to dinner when we arrived.

Mrs. Berkeley was precipitated into one room, and I into another, that we might get off our wraps and join the company as soon as possible.

Servants took us down to the dining-room.

General Cradle received my wife, and Mrs. Cradle received me.

As we approached the table in a blaze of light, I observed

that my hostess looked at me, and immediately became very much embarrassed. I knew something was wrong. I felt as uncomfortable as a fish out of water.

My wife being directly behind me, I turned and whispered in her ear, "Say, Augusta, am I all right?"

She gave me one little look, and I thought she would sink to the floor.

"You have left off your collar and your necktie, and your shirt-bosom is not buttoned," she gasped.

There I was.

The whole company were glaring at me, as though I was an escaped lunatic. The ladies were suffused with blushes. Some of them appeared insulted; and yet, as I said to my wife when she was leading me out of the dining-room, those very ladies

THERE I WAS.

had on lower-necked dresses than I. It was something like their own style which I had innocently adopted, and they thought it was horrid. Since they could blush so easily at my appearance, is it not strange that they could look unblushingly in a mirror?

MISS SLIMPSKITE.

There was old Miss Slimpskite, for example, a spinster not less than six feet perpendicular, and scarcely anything horizontal. She actually had the impudence to utter a little screech when she caught sight of my somewhat extended throat, and yet her own scrawny neck of skin and bones was bare to all eyes.

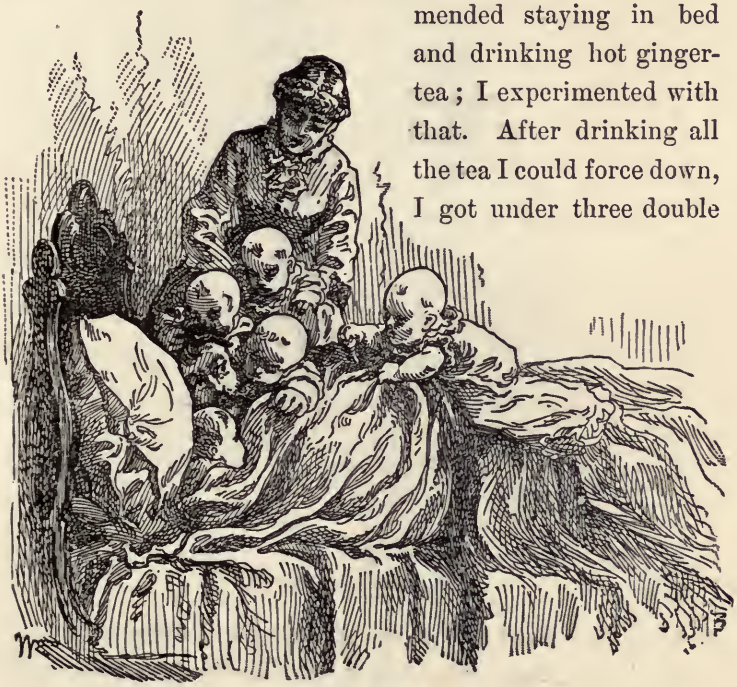
What slaves we are to fashion!

When Augusta says of a certain fit, or misfit, that "it is all the style," no amount of denunciation or ridicule can kill it until it has had its day, after which nothing can keep it alive.

CHAPTER XV.

MISCHIEVOUS SNUFF.

IN some unaccountable way, on the evening of General Cradle's dinner-party, I took a severe cold. Nothing would check it. Some one advised Turkish baths; I tried ten or twelve, but grew rapidly worse. Another recommended staying in bed and drinking hot ginger-tea; I experimented with that. After drinking all the tea I could force down, I got under three double



HAPPY MOMENTS.

blankets, to which Mrs. Berkeley would occasionally add five or six of the babies; there I stayed for three days and

three nights — envying Jonah for having been so much more comfortable than myself.

The hotter I became, the more of a cold I seemed to have. I felt that whatever was done must be done quickly, or Father Time would mow me down and rake me up. So I arose, dressed myself, took a little nourishment — nothing but a can of cold lobster and a piece of mince pie — then put on my buffalo-skin overcoat, and boldly sallied forth to face the bleak noon-day blasts of September. Indeed, the temperature was such a contrast to what I had just come

EXTREMES MEET.

out of, that I felt chilly, although every few minutes I met somebody who told me he had just lost a friend by sun-stroke, and that he himself expected to go next.

At last I met a person who changed the whole tenor of my life. He was a patent-medicine man.

"You have a cold," said he.

"YOU HAVE A COLD?"

"Much obliged to you for the information," said I. "When I go home I will speak to my wife about it."

"I have got something right here," he observed, "that will take that cold entirely away before you can get home."

"Do I appear like a gull?" I inquired, casting on him a contemptuous look.

"Hardly."

"You had better say 'hardly.' No, sir; the editor and publisher of *The Farmer's Guide*—two dollars and fifty cents a year, in advance—can't be duped. When I buy a thing, I know precisely what I am getting, or I let it alone."

"You are just the sort of man I like to deal with," exclaimed he. "You shall know what you are purchasing and what it can do, before you pay me a dollar. This is the celebrated Bethsaida Snuff, of which there are only six boxes in the United States, and four of them are in my possession. Now open your nostrils wide, and inhale a pinch of this invaluable remedy. It will cost you nothing, and rid you immediately of what otherwise may prove fatal."

I took the snuff as directed.

Charming!

But how I did sneeze!

How sneeze after sneeze followed each other in quick succession, like an immense drove of sheep going through a small gate. How I was racked, and torn, and tattered. Verily, I thought I should sneeze my head off.

A crowd began to gather about me to see what was the matter. Other crowds came to see what that crowd was doing, and long before I was done sneezing I was surrounded by a howling mob. I reeked with perspiration. I did not use a word of profanity; I could n't. The sneeze-train had the right of way, and everything else had to wait.

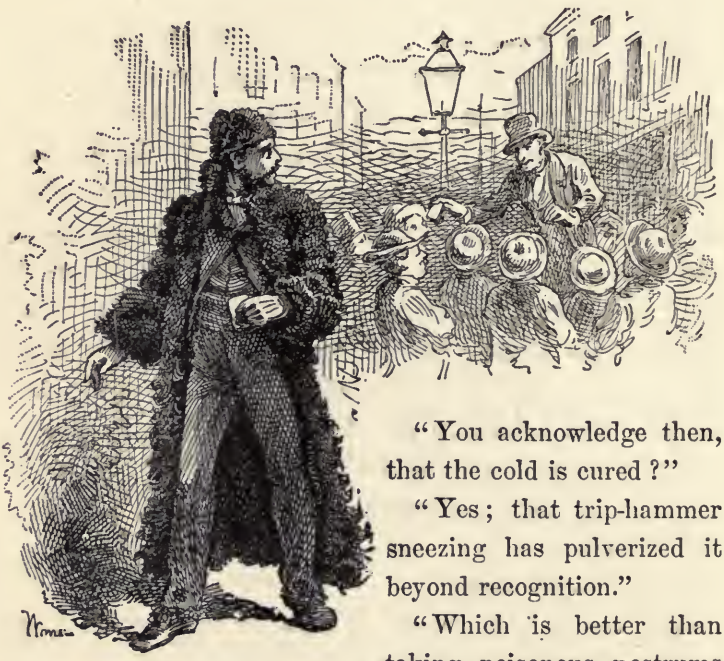
All things have an end.

"How do you feel?" asked the patent-medicine man, as soon as there was a prospect of making me hear anything.

"Mad," I muttered.

"How is your head?"

"Clear as a bell, sure as I'm alive!"



A PROUD MAN.

"You acknowledge then, that the cold is cured?"

"Yes; that trip-hammer sneezing has pulverized it beyond recognition."

"Which is better than taking poisonous nostrums into the stomach, and being sick a-bed for months, is n't it?"

"Sir," replied I, "You are indeed a benefactor of your race. How much of this Bethsaida snuff did you say you have on hand?"

Only four boxes, one ounce to the box; and as you are the universally honored proprietor of *The Farmer's*

Guide, and a man of extraordinary influence, I shall be most happy to let you have the entire lot for ten dollars."

I relieved him of the entire lot.

Being a man of good business instincts, he proceeded immediately to take advantage of the crowd I had drawn, by exhibiting some patent soap, of which he sold forty or fifty dollars worth before I was out of sight. Undoubtedly his audience needed it.

Proudly I went home. Augusta disappointed me; not a bit enthusiastic did she become over my improved condition.

"The cold will come on again," said she.

"Suppose it does! Can't I level it to the ground with this snuff battery?"

"You will find that there is something wrong with that snuff, and that you have squandered the ten dollars."

"Augusta, I wish you would n't always try to depreciate my judgment. When I do a good thing, why can't you give me credit for it?"

"We will wait," said she.

In the middle of the night, I awoke, feeling as though I had taken a new cold. However, I had faith in the snuff, and proceeded immediately to utilize as large a dose as I could furnish lodgings for.

Charming, again.

Pretty soon I had my wife, the nurse, the house-maid, and the six babies wide awake. The latter were frightened, and began screaming, with one accord. Bedlam reigned supreme; even to the disturbance of a number of our neighbors. But this cold was finally mastered the same as the previous one.

"I told you so," said I to Augusta, and then fell into a sweet sleep from which I had no waking till breakfast time.

It required about ten days to get rid of all the new colds that came, but complete victory finally perched on my banner; and I had a whole box of Bethsaida snuff left.

"The rats are destroying everything in the house," said my wife, as I was starting out one evening to do a little marketing. "I wish you would bring home some strong-smelling cheese, and I will set a trap for them."

"Very well," said I.

I visited several grocery stores, but could not find any cheese that had the requisite odor. The grocers brought on the strongest they had, and seemed greatly surprised when I told them it had no more smell than bass-wood.

The trouble was this, although I was entirely ignorant of the fact, that the Bethsaida snuff had totally destroyed my nerves of smelling. So, like many another grumbler, I kept finding fault with the cheese, when the wrong belonged wholly to myself.

"You had better go to Schmidt's, on Baxter street," advised a merchant, whose cheese I had just refused. "He keeps the strongest article in the market."

To Schmidt's I went. He owned a liquor saloon, and furnished a free-lunch counter.

"I heard you had some strong cheese," said I.

"Ya, de pest sheeze in de world. Zoost you dry dat vonce."

"This is no better than any," replied I, sniffing at the sample he handed me.

"Dat es goot old Limburger sheeze."

"But there is no smell to it."

"Tunder and blixen! How much schmel does you takes?"

"I want something to catch rats."

"Oh! dat's him, is she? Zoost you vait here teel I go fotch soom sheeze vat vill bleeze you werry goot."

Thus saying, he went out into the back yard, and got about a pound of Limburger cheese which had been thrown away on account of its having driven off so many customers. It had been made for a German fair, and had taken the first premium, on account of its unprecedented strength. It pos-

TESTING THE ARTICLE.

sessed the peculiarity of growing *more decided* as it got older, till now its strength was gigantic.

"Schmel of dat," said Herr Schmidt, as he handed me the sample with a pair of long tongs.

"I believe that is a little odoriferous," I remarked, inhaling a full breath. It isn't just what my wife wants, but if I can't get anything stronger, it will have to answer."

Schmidt smiled as he handed me the package.

I put the cheese into my overcoat pocket, and started for home.

Coming to the church formerly ministered to by the Rev. Shepherdskin, but now by the Rev. Selah Brownell, and to which Augusta and I were accustomed to go whenever we went to church anywhere, I noticed that it was lighted up. Then I recollected that it was prayer-meeting night. Feeling an honest desire to be benefited in my higher nature, I entered the sanctuary. The usual proportion of ladies and gentlemen were present—seventy-two ladies and nine gentlemen, counting the minister as one of the gentlemen.

He was engaged in one of his complete prayers. As I took my seat, he was just entering Japan. I knew he had to go to China, India, Egypt, Spain, France, Germany, and all the other European nations, as well as all the isles of the sea, before he would strike America; and that then he would remember Washington, Albany, Blackwell's Island, and Wall street, the congregation of dearly-beloved brethren and sisters before him, and every other person for whom he should pray in this whole world, or in any other world.

The Rev. Brownell was too conscientious to slight any part of his work. His supplications were not only elaborate in detail, but rich in classic English, with here and there a sprinkling of Latin and Greek. I had taken my seat between two elderly ladies. In a few minutes, and while the pastor was devoutly calling Heaven's attention to the Vatican, they had the rudeness to get up and quietly move into another pew. Then one of the nine noiselessly arose and opened a window, after which another window, and still another. Then somebody else opened a door. Pretty soon the woman who was nearest to me began to faint, and was

carried out. All her particular friends went out to nurse her. Two other ladies were overcome; and when they and their attendants had resorted to the vestibule, there was not much left. The Rev. Selah Brownell was the pastor, and I was the audience.

I was astonished.

A DISTURBED CONGREGATION.

I knew well enough that he would also be astonished as soon as he opened his eyes.

In course of time the prayer was finished. The first thing the good man said was, "Where in the world is my congregation?"

I felt humorous; and besides, I was anxious to give him

a hint that his devotions were unnecessarily long, so I answered:

"Quite likely, sir, they have gone home to breakfast."

"AMEN!"

In his superabundance of native innocence, he anxiously consulted his watch.

"It cannot be so very late," he remarked. "What is it by your time?"

Before I had a chance to reply, the redolence of my abominable Limburger cheese, of whose very existence I had for-

gotten, and of whose peculiar nature I was entirely ignorant, struck the pulpit with full force.

"What scent is this?" he inquired.

"I don't know," said I. "Probably it is one that somebody brought for the contribution-box."

"I refer," said he, "to an unspeakably repulsive emanation of which my olfactory nerves have just taken full cognizance."

"Perhaps," suggested I, anxious to give another hint, "it comes from some of those *dead languages* you have just been unearthing."

He hastily pronounced the benediction, and the meeting was closed.

I resolved to go straight home, and describe the affair to Augusta, and to ask her to solve the mystery with that instinct of hers.

To my surprise, she gave me an indifferent reception.

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed. "August, you have been mobbed. Your clothes are ruined with bad eggs. Don't come near me! Don't, I pray! How did it happen?"

I was stupefied, disgusted, vexed.

"It is no great blessing," remarked I, "to be obliged to live in a world where everybody has gone crazy except myself."

In a few minutes, the fumes of my triumphant Limburger struck the six babies with telling effect, bringing every one of them from the pleasant land of Nod to a screeching wakefulness.

After some time, Augusta became unconscious to the existence of the disagreeable odor, and wondered how her imagination could have so thoroughly deceived her.

By a merciful provision of nature, all violently obnoxious

smells are self-destructive. In course of time, they temporarily destroy the very power by which they are recognized.

I found occasion to learn this interesting fact when I was a small boy.

I had set a steel trap in what I supposed was a woodchuck's burrow. The next morning, when I visited it, my nostrils were greeted with the most pronounced essence that I had ever experienced.

My supposed woodchuck was a black and white creature, with a bushy tail, which ornamental structure he shook vigorously and defiantly at me as I approached him, while the air became filled with a most penetrating and sickening odor. I endured it however like a little man, not blaming the woodchuck in the least; for I really had no idea of the source whence the perfume came, until after a while my nerves of smell became so overpowered that they resigned their office.

Proudly I took my spotted, squirming woodchuck by the—ear, and started for home.

(Strict veracity makes it necessary for me to explain that I did not really carry him by that portion of his anatomy designated as the "ear," but I have substituted that word just to please Augusta.)

During the first half-hour, he made lively use of that means of defence which fun-loving mother Nature had provided him; but at last he became discouraged. He had never seen any one like me before; neither had I ever met a woodchuck before. He was astonished; so was I.

As I climbed the garden fence, on the way to the house, I caught sight of my father hoeing weeds.

"O papa!" I exclaimed, see what a nice, fat woodchuck I have brought home for dinner!"

My father dropped his hoe and ran faster than I had ever seen him go before, making some remarks on the way, which I failed to catch.

As I walked in at the back door of the kitchen, my mother went flying and screaming through the opposite door. Then I strolled all through the house, still proudly holding to my game, trying to find her, for I heard her calling me, and knew that she wanted something.

No dwelling of man was ever more thoroughly fumigated than ours. I was kept out of school two weeks, during which all my clothing had to be buried in the earth.

To come back to the Limburger cheese, we learned through some of our neighbors what the trouble was. Every one advised me to destroy my garments; but I remembered my boyhood expe-

OVER THE GARDEN WALL.

rience, and adopted a more economical plan. I hired a man for four dollars to take them over to New Jersey, and bury them in deep earth.

Ten days later, I sent him again to see how they were doing; but he came back with the sad intelligence that some tramp had dug them up and carried them away.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SUMMER EXCURSION.

THE next summer, we had some very hot weather, and Augusta suggested that we take the children and go into the country for a few days recreation. She felt the need of a change of air, and I also was pining for recuperation, although I was able to sit up and take nourishment.

"I shall be satisfied with any arrangement for a short trip which you may make," said Augusta, "if you will only study economy."

My wife was always urging economy, economy, just as though I did not practice the most rigid economy always. I kept only one white monkey, and almost constantly deprived myself of its company, simply because it was cheaper to board it out than it would have been to repair the damages which would have resulted from keeping it at home.

"Augusta," said I, as I came home to dinner one day. "I have laid out our trip."

"How much will the tickets cost?" was the first question she asked, as though that was of the most importance.

"I have not sold out my newspaper business for the sake of a little vacation," I replied, somewhat irritated at her implied lack of confidence in my financial judgment.

"Where have you decided to go?" she inquired.

"To Central Islip, a healthful little village on Long Island."

She seemed disappointed.

"You told me to study economy," I continued, "and it occurred to me that Central Islip would be more conducive to that virtue than either Saratoga or Long Branch."

"When are we going?"

"To-morrow morning."

"We can't possibly get ready in so short a time."

"Oh, yes, we can, Augusta. I am all ready now except shaving."

"But it will be a sight of work to prepare for taking all the children."

"Augusta," said I, "why do you speak so impulsively? The children can be got ready in twenty minutes."

She did not argue the point any further, but submitted resignedly.

"What time to-morrow morning does our train leave?" she presently asked.

"That is where we have the advantage," I replied. "The trains can go when they get ready. I have engaged a livery team. It probably will not cost over six dollars a day, and I do not intend to be gone over a week."

Augusta did not smile.

"You see," I continued, "my object was to get even with the Long Island Railroad corporation. It has refused to insert its advertisement in *The Farmer's Guide*, and the only way in which I can resent the affront is to withdraw my patronage.

"Who is going to drive the horses?" asked my wife, manifesting slight alarm.

I felt that the question was an unnecessary reflection, and answered accordingly.

"The twins, of course."

SHOWING THEM HOW.

She did not pursue the subject further. I suppose her conscience reproved her.

It was nearly noon the next day before she had the children ready to start. Why it took her so long, I can't, for the life of me, see. I knew it made her a little nervous to have me keep asking what became of her spare time; and, as I was particularly anxious that we should both get off feeling good-natured, I kept mum, only remarking, as she picked up the last baby and left the house, "My dear, is it possible that you are ready *so* soon?"

We started. Augusta and I occupied the front seat of the carriage, she having the two youngest babies on her lap, while the other four were given the back seat, with the privilege of sitting on, or lying under it, as their own sweet wills might elect.

My horses were high-spirited, and I felt quite proud of my management of them, as I drove through Broadway without a smash-up.

Augusta cordially acknowledged that I did well, and I appreciated her fine judgment more than ever.

Late in the afternoon, we reached Hinsdale, and stopped at a farm-house to get water for the horses and milk for the youngsters.

Happening to see a *Farmer's Guide* lying on the sitting-room table, I realized at once that we were with a people possessing good sense, excellent taste, and lofty intelligence.

Accordingly, I made haste to introduce myself as the editor of that valuable paper, to which, I had no reason to doubt, they could trace a large share of their agricultural success.

It being their busy season, and they were haying, I offered to pitch on a load; which services were gladly accepted. The hay was a little green and heavy, and so was I.

At the first plunge of the pitch-fork, I got hold of an entire hay-cock, and quickly threw it upon the wagon. This elicited great applause from all the farm hands; and my wife, who was an interested spectator, confessed that she had never seen anything like it in all her life, and that she had no idea I possessed such a wealth of physical strength. This encouraged me, and I resolved to astonish the natives. I like to "show off," especially before Augusta. Now was my opportunity to let these simple country folks see what the editor of *The Farmer's Guide* knew about haying. Every one of them stopped their own work to look at me. Some laughed, some shouted with delight; but all united in paying me flattering compliments. I am fond of compliments. They act as a powerful tonic on my ambition.

A CHILD'S TOY.

Before I had pitched up half a dozen cocks, the man who had been trying to load was completely buried out of

sight. I shouted to him to *climb the pole.* (There was a tall pole attached to the front of the hay-rack, to build the load by.)

At the seventh cock I broke the fork-handle in two.

"Look here!" I exclaimed, "why do you give a *man* such a child's toy as this to work with? It might answer very well in the kitchen to toast bread on, but—"

CHANGING PLACES.

My remarks were interrupted by peals of laughter.

Amid rousing cheers and intense enthusiasm another and much larger fork was placed in my hands.

Augusta confessed her delight. Two of the men ordered me to put down their names for *The Farmer's Guide.*

By this time the man on the wagon had succeeded in working his way to the top of the load.

Once more I buckled down to the work. Haycock after haycock flew through the air like mad. Up went a huge rattlesnake, and down from the load tumbled the man, wellnigh frightened out of his wits.

The owner of the farm assured me that it was the first rattlesnake he had seen in those parts for twenty years.

"The probability is," said I, "that under ordinary circum-

stances the snakes have plenty of time to make their escape before a pitch-fork reaches them." [Tremendous applause.]

The farmer was so delighted that he kept me and my family and the livery horses all night, and would not take a cent in return.

But my story is not all told. The worst is to come.

Next morning when I awoke I discovered that I had been changed in the course of the night for somebody else. Both

SALT AND ALCOHOL.

my hands were badly blistered; my elbows had no joint-oil; and my back seemed to have but one bone, which, under the circumstances, was most decidedly one too many.

"What is the matter?" anxiously inquired my wife, after I had made several ineffectual attempts to get out of bed.

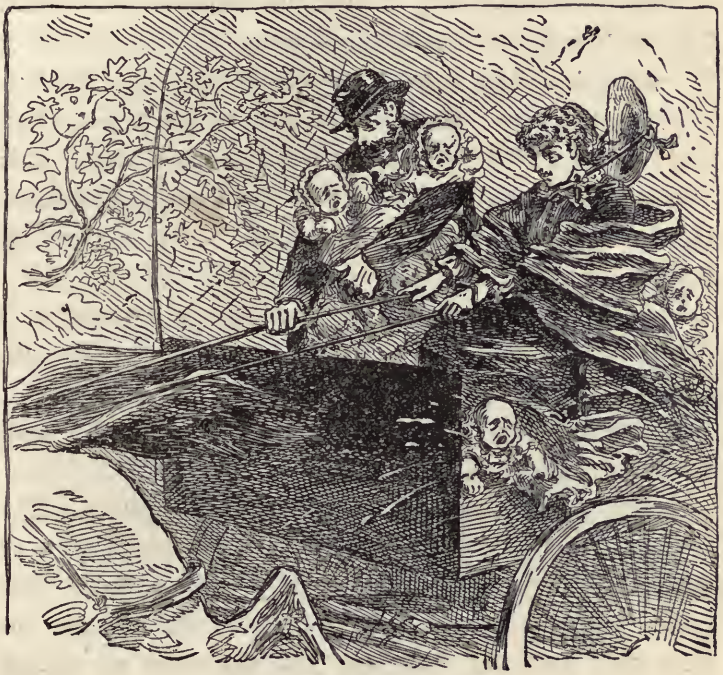
"It must be the rheumatism," said I. "This climate does not agree with me."

Augusta went down stairs and borrowed a bottle of liniment, the half of which she rubbed into me before I was able to get my boots on.

"How do you feel this morning?" inquired the farmer and his men, as we sat down to breakfast.

"Splendid!" said I. "Never better in my life! Does me good to amuse myself with a little light work."

My wife was surprised. So was my conscience; and it



DOING THEIR LEVEL BEST.

took two weeks for that troubled member of my system to return to its usual calm state.

After breakfast we resumed our journey.

The men had fed our horses with large rations of oats, which made them feel so lively that they, too, had a mind

to "show off." I am not sure that their oats had not been soaked in whisky.

How we flew!

What little strength I had left was soon exhausted in attempting to reduce our speed to the demands of reasonable safety.

"It is no use!" I cried in despair. "My rheumatism is so bad I can't hold them."

Then we changed off. I held the babies,—those which had not been assorted and stowed away in the hind end of the carriage,—while Augusta drove. Indeed, she did drive.

There had been a shower some time in the night, which left the road covered with about half an inch of mud. This the horses gathered on their feet as they went, and plastered us with it, right and left, babies and all. Then the screaming began. Every baby did its level best.

I saw that Augusta had taken too large a contract, so I dropped the children into a promiscuous heap, and we both drove.

All the natives along the road stared with wide open mouths as we passed by.

At last we struck a little bridge and went to pieces. The stream of water and the bed of soft mud into which we were thrown undoubtedly saved our bones, if not our lives. The horses reserved the forward wheels of the carriage for their own use, and went on, just the same as though nothing had happened, only a little more so.

The first thing Augusta did was to strip every baby of every rag, to see if it had met with any bodily injury. Nothing was discovered worse than black and blue spots, of which there were too many to mention.

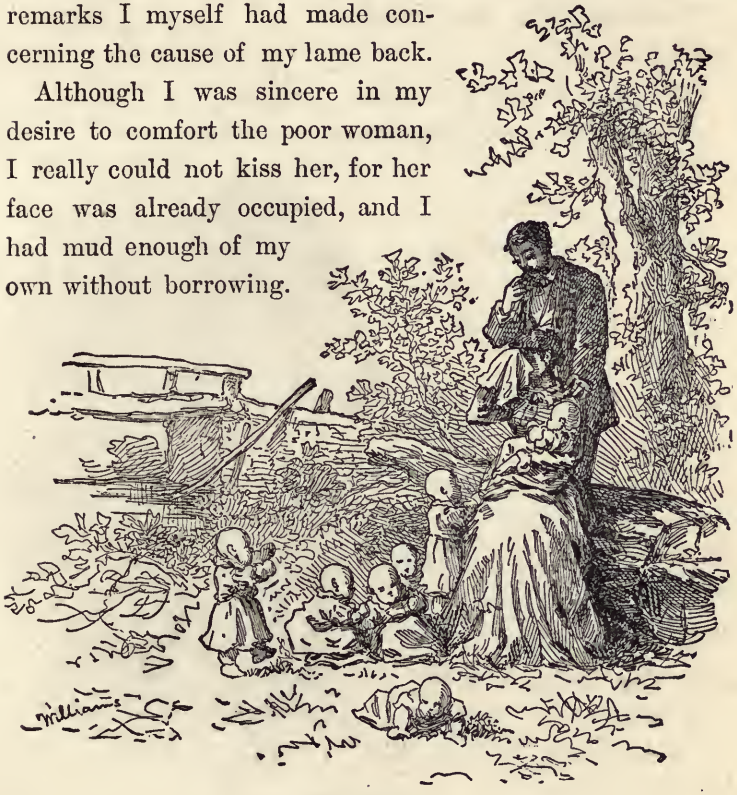
After dressing the little darlings she sat down on a log,

took a good look at the wreck, considered the plight we were in, and began to cry.

"I told you so!" she sobbed.

As a matter of fact, she had *not* told me so; but I readily forgave her the innocent fabrication, considering some remarks I myself had made concerning the cause of my lame back.

Although I was sincere in my desire to comfort the poor woman, I really could not kiss her, for her face was already occupied, and I had mud enough of my own without borrowing.



STRANDED.

We were in a piece of woods, not a house in sight.

Under such circumstances, we concluded to adopt the tactics of Micawber, and wait for something to turn up.

In course of an hour, an honest farmer turned up. He was afoot and alone. We learned from him that the near-

est house was two miles away. I engaged his services to help us carry the babies, and we set out to walk to the house in question.

We had gone, perhaps, half a mile, when my wife, who had been bringing up the rear, suddenly cried out:

"August, how many babies have you got?"

"I have a whole one, I replied.

"And how many has that other man?"

"Two," said he.

"And *I* have two," added Augusta, her voice trembling with alarm.

"That makes only five," I remarked.—"Where can the other one be?"

"Where *ought* it to be?" cried my wife, looking at me with a somewhat withering gaze.

TAKING AN INVENTORY.

She might have added unpleasant words, but she refrained.

We took an inventory of stock, to ascertain what baby was missing, and found that it was my wife's departed sister's child.

"Augusta," said I, "are you sure you took that baby

along when we left home? I don't remember having noticed it since then."

Augusta pressed her lips very closely together, and preserved a dignified silence. I knew then that she had respect for my feelings, and was making a strong effort not to wound them. If there is a perfect Christian in the world, my wife is the woman. However, I could not forget that she had asked me, before leaving home, *who* was going to drive the horses.

THE LOST, FOUND.

We all went back to the place where the accident had occurred, and there, soundly asleep in the shadow of a great log, was the lost child. I kissed it, partly because I was really glad to see its sweet face again, and partly on Augusta's account. I felt that she had suffered enough through my thoughtless acts and more thoughtless words, and I was determined to do everything in my power to make atonement.

We retraced our steps, and in due time reached the house to which we had before started.

The next morning, Augusta said she had had sufficient recreation; so we took the cars, and returned to New York.

The horses were afterwards found; so I had nothing to

pay for except the carriage, and was comparatively happy. Comparatively, I may well say; for he who seeks more than this will find himself in pursuit of the rainbow.

Happiness is like the fire-fly, which cannot be seen except when on the wing. It is like an April snowflake, disappearing the moment it rests. It is like a ray of sunlight, beautiful within an open casket, but ready to perish the instant the cover is shut down. It is like a tender bird, full of life while free, but dying in the hand that would hold it fast. It is like a flame, which will perpetually burn only on condition that new fuel shall be perpetually added. Did any one ever have two unbroken hours of unalloyed happiness, even while on a vacation? I had fifteen minutes of it when I pitched on the load of hay; but I would not pay what it cost, and take it again.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FUNNY COLUMN.

THE next Sunday I went to church with Augusta. I was but little edified, however, for the minister took occasion to pass some severe strictures on newspaper men. The queerest thing he said was, that the "funny column in almost every paper, not excepting the religious press, was most read, and most demoralizing of all." As *The Farmer's Guide* had never had less than five columns of fun, I felt myself vituperated by this clerical onslaught.

Nevertheless I was not too prejudiced in my own favor to investigate the subject, and accordingly next morning I started out for the purpose of examining and cross-examining a few notorious hard cases among sinners, that I might learn the sources of their degradation, poverty, and dirt.

To find just the persons whose lives I had resolved to investigate, necessitated my visiting a liquor saloon. Perhaps I ought to beg pardon of my friend, the enemy—namely, the saloon keeper, but nevertheless what I say is true. His business is the magnet which draws together a motley crowd of not over-nice people.

Arriving at the place in question, the first person to attract my attention was a young man in years, but old in appearance, whose unshapely person was somewhat distended with beer, and whose jaws seemed to have taken a contract

to chew a large quantity of plug tobacco in a very limited time.

"Do you know," said I, addressing him kindly, "that you are swiftly shortening your life by the habits you are now indulging? You are endowed with reason, and to that I appeal in trying to persuade you to curb your appetite for these poisons. Think of it; that liquid in your glass, which you call pure brandy, is a compound consisting of nearly seventy per cent. water, thirty per cent. alcohol, and more or less of tannin, fusil oil, acetic ether, and oil of neroli. If there is any nourishment in that keg of beer on which you are sitting, you certainly cannot afford to buy it in that form, for you can get an equal amount at any bakery for ten cents. But it is not the food part which you desire. Take the spirit out of the drink, and you would not touch the insipid stuff which remains. And what is this spirit—this wonderful alcohol—for which a million fortunes are spent every year? It may be manufactured from inorganic bodies. The ingredients are olefiant gas—which is one of the components of ordinary coal gas—oil of vitriol, and water. Now I am sure that you and all men would abstain from this stuff if you realized fully what it is. In this respect chemical analysis may do more for you than the Women's Praying and Working Band. And as for tobacco—"

"Hold on, boss!" cried my uneasy listener, "that 's lecture enough for one day; and now I want to show you a little item in this morning's paper, which is responsible for my being here at this minute, engaged as you find me."

I took the paper and read the item which he pointed out in the "funny column," as follows:

"Mr. John Owens, who lately died at Jackson aged 114, was in some respects a remarkable man. He blushingly admitted that he had used

whiskey since he was ten years old, and chewed tobacco and smoked more or less for a hundred and three years."

I handed back the paper in disgust, and scored one point for the preacher.

My next lesson was taken in New Jersey. Happening into the outskirts of Hoboken, I overheard the screaming of a young girl, indicating that she was in mortal terror. On rushing to her rescue, I found a half-dozen rude boys, who, having tied a rope around the poor creature's waist, were trying to lower her into a deep well.

Inquiring into the cause of this outrage, I was told by the larger boy—who might have been fourteen years old—that he was justified in his conduct, because he was engaged to the girl's sister.

"What difference does that make?" I asked.

"Why," said he, "I was readin' in the paper t'other day that a good way to find out whether there is bad air in a well is to get a rope and let down one of your wife's relatives."

I took out my pencil and scored another point for the preacher.

When I was about ten rods away, the precocious boy who was engaged to be married cried out:

"I say, mister! mebby you allow I was a little too previous!"

Shortly after this, I met a colored man, with whom I fell into conversation. Learning from his remarks that he had considerable property, I set about ascertaining the sources from which it came. It turned out that he secured start in business by engaging in dishonest transactions. When I reproved him for this, he laughed, and replied that it was his aim to be as much like a civilized white man as possible.

"But you are taking exactly the wrong course," I said.

"Oh, no, I aint," he replied. "My ole ooman learned to read, an' she's done got a piece in her scrap-book now what tells the hull story in a nut-shell."

"And what is that story?" I asked. "Can you repeat it?"

"Oh, yaas sar, word for word: 'A certain bank over-paid one hundred dollars on a check. The Georgia negro who received it at once returned the money. The local paper says this is another evidence that the race can never be civilized.'"

I herewith scored another point for the preacher.

A western town had just been greatly excited because three young men had been killed in trying to apply lynch law to a thief. This, too, I resolved to investigate. My first discovery was that the community thereabout respected the power of the mob far more than it did the tedious processes of law and order. I sent for the local newspaper, and found the funny column filled with such gems as this:

"He found a rope, and picked it up,
And with it walked away;
It happened that to t'other end
A horse was hitched, they say.

They found a tree, and tied the rope
Unto a swinging limb;
It happened that the other end
Was somehow hitched to him."

Again I scored a point for the preacher.

My pursuit next led me to visit a man in the Tombs, charged with murder. Among his effects, which I was permitted to examine, I found a newspaper containing this outrageous item, under "Wit and Humor," and which the

criminal, according to his own confession, had regarded as "mighty good reading."

POWERFUL ARGUMENTS.—PROMPT CHANGE OF MIND OF A TICKET AGENT.—A few days ago a tall, rough-looking mountaineer entered the Union Railroad ticket office at Denver, and, through mistake, purchased a ticket for New York *via* the Kansas Pacific line, when he wanted to go over the Union Pacific. He did not discover this fact until after the ticket had been paid for, and on asking the agent to change it, the latter refused to do so.

"You won't change this ticket, then; won't you?"

"No sir," replied the agent; "you have your ticket and I have the money for it, and if you want a ticket over the other route, you will have to buy it."

Very quietly the stranger twisted his ticket into a small roll; very serenely he drew from under his right coat-tail a six-shooter about the dimensions of a mountain howitzer; coolly and deliberately he stuck the twisted ticket into the muzzle of that six-shooter, and sticking the ugly-looking thing through the little square window of the ticket office, and almost in the agent's face, and speaking in the tone that left no doubt of his determination, said:

"Stranger, thar's that ticket; take it yourself and change it, or I'll blow it clean through you."

The ticket was changed immediately, and without any more words from the agent; and the mountaineer walked away, saying: "I jest thought I could induce him to change his mind a leetle."

I was now satisfied that the clergyman was partially right. Wholly right he certainly was not; for if humor were as completely banished from literature as he hoped and prayed it might be, all books and papers would be as dry as his own sermons, and as quickly relegated to the dust of ages.

A certain degree of mirthfulness is as essential in the proper disposition of mental food as pebbles are in a chicken's crop. As a hen swallows wholesome stones, and rejects poisonous minerals, so ought men to draw the line with utmost care between wit good and wit evil.

Says Wolcott:

> "Care to our coffin adds a nail, no doubt;
> But every laugh so merry draws one out."

The Bible, itself, is not too sanctimonious to recognize some of the witicisms of man.

Take, for example, the illustration of the "mote" and the "beam." It originated in Judea, when Israel was ruled by judges. One day a suitor said to the judge, "Would that you could pluck the mote (that is, small stick) from your eye." To which the judge retorted, quickly as a flash: "Would that thou couldst pull the whole beam from your own eye." I can imagine what a roar of laughter followed this sally, and how the marshal grew hot with excitement as he called "Order! Order! or I will clear the court-room!" The divine master had read or heard this anecdote, and did not hesitate to apply it to the lesson he would impart.

The good and evil of this world comes into such intimate relationship, even in our laughter, that there is no moral safety for any one except in constant distillation of right from wrong.

Imitate the sun; it does not cry out in agony, "Water, water everywhere; but not a drop to drink!" But it patiently shines on the great dark sea, drawing therefrom naught but fresh, pure, sweet water, leaving base minerals and salts to sink into the unfathomable depths.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OUR FIRST AFFLICTION.

MY "good streak" still continued, and in view of the fact that my dear wife had not had a very enjoyable vacation, I was anxious that she should go to a Sunday-school pic-nic, which was about to take place at Glen Island. I knew that it would require some finesse on my part to get her to go, for I was determined that she should leave all the children at home in order that she might have a good day's rest.

"Augusta," said I, "would it give you pleasure to be of assistance to me in my business?"

"Most assuredly, it would," she replied.

"Very well, then. I want to get a little report of to-morrow's Sunday-school pic-nic for *The Farmer's Guide*. Would you be kind enough to go up to Glen Island and spend the day receiving mental impressions, just to accommodate me? You will enjoy the sail up the Hudson ever so much."

"But what is to become of the children?"

"Our nurse has always proved herself quite trustworthy, and will doubtless take good care of them in your absence. Besides," added I, as a clincher to the whole argument, "I shall be at home myself most of the day, and can give my personal attention to the little darlings."

Augusta hesitated for a moment, but finally, out of the richness of her heart, spoke like a true woman.

"It will seem strange to be separated from the children, and I am sure I shall be thinking of them continually, and imagining all manner of evil befalling them; but inasmuch as I can be of service to you, I gladly consent to go."

I shook hands with myself, so to speak, on the triumph of my tact.

Next morning Augusta got off in good season after giving all manner of warning and instruction concerning the babies.

UP THE RIVER.

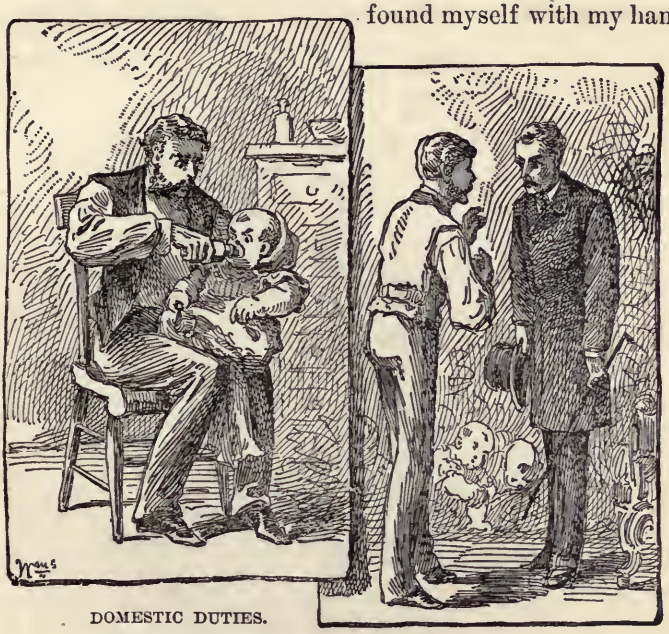
Then I stayed at the house awhile chatting with the old nurse about the respective merits of the children. She agreed with me fully (I was paying her ten dollars a week), that the *twins* were the best looking, the best behaved, and the best every way. She agreed further that Pete was the homeliest and most ill-tempered of the entire six. He was one of the two who had been brought to us in a basket.

Thus, the old nurse and myself were getting along very harmoniously in our comparison of views, when the door-

bell rang, and a messenger announced a telegram directed to her.

She was called to go immediately to Paterson, where her only sister lay dangerously ill. She went.

All the babies seemed to miss her at once, and I soon found myself with my hands



DOMESTIC DUTIES.

full. Scream they would, at the top of their voices, in spite of all the shaking I could give them.

At last I thought of the medicine for colic. I thought I knew the very bottle in which it was kept. However, I would not risk it on the twins, but forthwith administered a good dose to Pete. He was always the darling I resorted to whenever I wanted to try an experiment. In this case the remedy seemed not to prevail. I discovered afterward, that, in the place of soothing syrup, I had given him a spoonful of hair-oil.

Towards evening a well-dressed and gentlemanly appearing stranger called on me. I could not make him out. He evidently wished to disguise the true object of his visit. He manifested a most lively interest in the children, asking scores of questions about them. But his chief attention centered on Pete. To him he spoke in subdued, affectionate

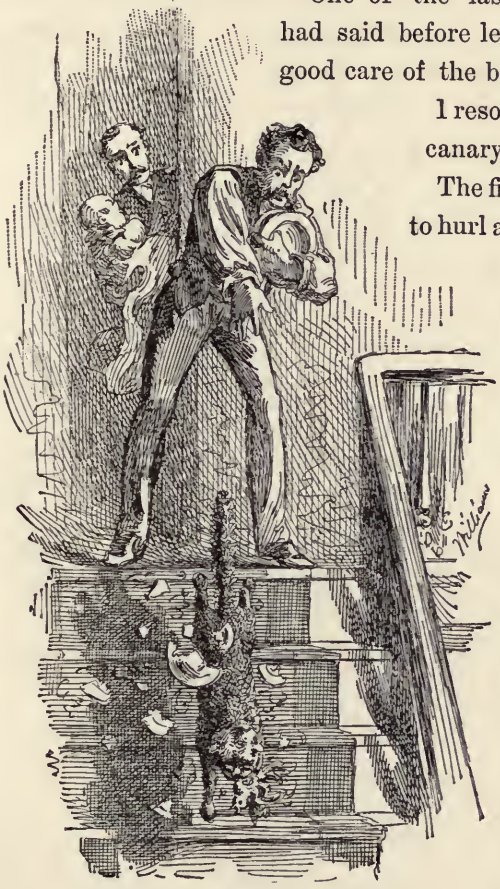
"WAIT A MINUTE!"

tones. Pete did not seem to be feeling very well, and I thought this might be the circumstance which elicited the stranger's sympathy.

"Mr. Berkeley," said he, as he took the child in his arms and kissed him, "I want to impart the secret of my life to you, after which I shall ask a great favor which I fear you will not be willing to grant."

"Wait a minute," said I, for I had just caught sight of a

neighbor's cat which had stolen into the room. But I was too late. The cat gave a spring and seized my wife's favorite canary, which I had let out of its cage an hour before for the purpose of amusing the children.



A GOOD SHOT.

One of the last things Augusta had said before leaving was: "take good care of the birds!"

I resolved to recover her canary if possible.

The first thing I did was to hurl a bottle of medicine at the thief, but she, thinking she did'nt need it, stepped one side and let it go through the lower part of a mirror.

This provoked me, and as the cat was now on her way down stairs, I seized a half-dozen china plates—and pursued her. She flew through a window, and as I had to stop to open the outer door, I fell somewhat behind. I succeeded in reaching the piazza, however, just as the beast dashed down the steps, and after her I hurled the plates. The two

first missed the mark, but the third took her squarely near the flanks and got a magnificent purchase. Never did I see a more beautiful sight than the way in which the cat was thrown. It was worth more than a circus. Her double somersault would have been the envy of Barnum's champion acrobat. My wrath all turned into joy as I saw her stagger to her feet, and lean against the fence for support.

But I experienced a new sensation when a very tall, thin man, dressed in citizen's clothes, laid his hand on my shoulder, and said: "Come, sir, I want you to go with me."

"Where are you going?" I asked, a little savagely.

"To a place in Mercer Street."

"What place?"

"The police-station of the precinct."

"Let me alone," I vociferated. "You are nothing but a meddling citizen."

"You are mistaken," said he coolly. "I am connected with the Humane Society, and have authority to arrest you for "cruelty to animals."

"That settles it," said I.

AT THE CAPTAIN'S OFFICE.

Perhaps he would have been lenient toward me if I had gently explained to him the exact situation in which I was placed with reference to my home affairs, but, unfortunately, I was too angry to even inquire after his health.

I did tell the captain of police when I reached the sta-

tion that my wife had gone to the pic-nic, my nurse to New Jersey, and that there was no one left at home to take care of my six darling babies, except a man whom I didn't know; but the captain never shed a tear. He was accustomed to pitiful tales.

He informed me that I must occupy a prisoner's cell until the next morning, and that then I would be sent to court for trial.

My wife returned from the pic-nic at an early hour, and probably reached the house about the time I was incarcerated. What a sight met her gaze!

Fragments of the broken mirror were scattered about the room. A medicine bottle was smashed. Six china plates were missing. The best bird was gone, the nurse was gone, I was gone, and *little Pete was gone*—with the stranger.

The next day when I was permitted to go home, Augusta and I had our saddest meeting. For some seconds neither of us could speak. But even in her pitiful look I could detect no shadow of that reproof which I felt I deserved.

Explanations were made, and then with one accord, we both cried out from our afflicted hearts, "Poor Pete! Poor Pete!"

For the first time I was made to realize how even that child had woven its precious life around my affections. I no longer regarded him as ill-tempered, but nervous, timid, and weakly. More than any one of the others he should have been uniformly treated with kindness and patience. How sorely I regretted every hasty word I had ever spoken to, or of him. I would have given anything in the world to have been able to recall the past, or to efface from memory that nauseous dose of hair-oil which I had put into his mouth.

How little did either Augusta or I care for the loss of birds, mirrors, or china plates, compared with that of this one child.

We never know the true value of any human soul until we stop to think,—and sometimes it requires the wrath of high heaven to set us thinking.

I employed detectives to try to find Pete.

Instead of giving a report of the Sunday-school pic-nic in the next issue of *The Farmer's Guide*, I used all my spare space in condemning that system of government which allows a respectable citizen to be arrested for some insignificant offence; and to be thrown into prison with hardened criminals, without having any opportunity to secure bail until court sits, which may not be until the next day.

BEHIND THE BARS.

As to the children, we kept up the original number, for it was not long before another little darling came to board with us.

He did not come in a basket, either.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FIGHT WITH A GHOST.

IN the interest of the *Guide* I visited the great Perkins farm on Long Island. I was scarcely out of Brooklyn on my way to it when I met a well-dressed gentleman running at great speed.

"What is the trouble?" I inquired.

"Oh," said he, "there is a woman back here who was trying to get over a fence; she has fallen and her foot is caught so that she cannot get away, and she is in great suffering, and I am hunting for somebody that knows her to go to her assistance."

"Why did you not help her out of the trouble yourself?"

"So I would," said he, "but I have never been introduced to her."

"An escaped lunatic!" I said to myself, yet on more deliberate reflection, I was not so certain of it; for I remembered that during the period that I was suffering with a malignant form of apparently incurable impecuniosity, there were people who were rather particular not to come too close to me unless they had been socially vaccinated.

In those days Augusta and I went to a certain church three months without having any attention paid to us, and afterward when the question came up at the Ladies' Social Circle whether any of its members knew who we were, every

lady acknowledged that she did, but gave it as a reason for never having spoken to us that she had never been introduced.

At the Perkins' farm I went into ecstacy over every thing in general as the proprietor grew enthusiastic in its description. This is a fault of my impulsive nature. Momentarily, at least, I am carried completely away on the wings of every stirring occasion. When I go to a revival meeting there is nothing I so ardently want as religion. I think I would give the world for it. Next day, if I read an account of some shrewd burglar who has entered a bank, cracked open the best safe ever made, and coolly walked off with half a million in cash, I find myself envying him to the extent of repining that my own early education was somewhat neglected.

When Mr. Perkins went into raptures over the fine qualities of his Berkshires and Chester Whites, there was nothing on earth seemed so desirable to me as a drove of pigs. I wanted to buy all he had and astonish Augusta. He told me he had a number,—he could not tell how many—that had got away, gone into the woods and had become wild, and that he would allow any man to catch them at the halves.

That struck me as an easy way of coming into possession of valuable game. What were the wild-boar hunts in which our Saxon ancestry engaged compared with this? Why go to the Adirondacks to shoot some poor stag that, having been driven into the water and surrounded by boats, is held by the tail by some well-paid native until the gun can be discharged, when right here was a brilliant opportunity for a huntsman to distinguish himself. I was determined to try it.

Next morning I went early to the woods to begin my day's

work. A yard had been fenced off in the middle of the forest, and in one corner of the yard was a little house for the pigs to occupy in case they should weary of all out-doors and seek more comfortable quarters.

My plan was to drive the swine into this inclosure, where, according to the contract, half of them would be mine.

A PIG RACKET.

In about an hour I caught sight of one and gave him chase. I believe we both got more of it than we anticipated. He went through a blackberry patch at least twenty times, for he seemed to know that I had on my best suit of clothes.

I caught him at last, for I am a good runner, notwithstanding the size of my feet. Then I was lost. Which way

to steer him I did'nt know. I held to his two hind legs while he exercised his fore legs as best he could. It was a go-as-you-please race on his part, and luckily for me he chose to go to the inclosure. When I had put him in and stopped up the entrance, I patted myself on the back, so to speak, and went in search of another; and again met with success. Eight times before night I put a pig into the yard and had the satisfaction of seeing him run into the sty. It was the hardest day's work I ever did. Four fine porkers to take home to Augusta! How fondly I anticipated the kisses and praises she would shower upon me when she received the present.

You should have seen Mr. Perkins open his eyes when I told him that I had captured eight swine.

He was astonished. So was I the next day when I learned the truth of the matter. I had caught the same pig over and over again, for after each capture he had made his escape through the sty. And anyhow he was only an ancient, good-for-nothing brute that Perkins had put into the woods to act as a decoy so that the others might be led into the piggery.

While everybody was laughing at me, I moralized by considering how I had been engaged all my life in trying to encompass a few common-sense ideas. The trouble is that as soon as I get one into my brain it makes its escape through some neglected passage-way. In other words, my moral side has a broken down door.

"Hold good that which is good," may be an old-fashioned command, but after all it contains the gist of all wisdom.

The trouble with the modern mode of teaching is that it contemplates nothing but crowding in and has no concern over what may be crowded out. In its hot haste for acquisi-

tion it neglects retention. It urges the accumulation of a large store even when the store-house is badly dilapidated. It is constantly putting new wine into old bottles.

The marking and grading which our schools are using is productive of mental mischief. Pupils learn their lessons for temporary results only—the magic *ten* or *one hundred*, as the case may be. What is thus obtained neither endures nor promotes endurance. One may commit to memory a dozen pages for a particular occasion, or he may perform the same task for the purpose of increasing his permanent fund of knowledge. In the first instance the lesson will be likely to fade out as soon as the occasion for learning it has passed; while in the other, it will always remain. The motive which prompts one to learn is of as much importance as the learning itself. It decides not the quantity of learning, but its texture.

Intellectual surfeit is so much worse than intellectual hunger that I am no longer surprised when I see how many of our young men the schools and colleges are ruining.

A man will read three newspapers, spending two or three hours in the perusal, and when asked what the news is, will answer, "Nothing." A boy spends four years in college, only to give a similar answer when, in after life, the world demands of him what great thing he has learned.

To return to my narrative. I remained another night at the Perkins farm, and became the victim of a terrible fright. My sleep was broken at the best, for my experience in the woods had set every bone and muscle of my body to aching.

It must have been after midnight when I was aroused by a strange sound in my room. I sprang up in bed and looked toward the door, when my eyes met an object that caused my heart to stop beating. I recollected that Perkins

had told me just before I retired, that some persons were afraid of his house because it had the reputation of being haunted. I had thought then that my mind was too well poised to be frightened at such a relic of ancient and barbarous superstition.

Now here I was, trembling like an aspen leaf, in the presence of what I really believed was a veritable ghost. The room was dark as a pocket, save the presence of my uncanny visitor, who glowed with a dim, plutonic light which served to reveal every feature of his barbarous countenance. He was a full-grown Indian, and grasped a tomahawk in his right hand.

Either the apparition moved to and fro—now approaching my bedside and then retreating toward the door—or my nerves were so agitated that the optic mechanism was sufficiently wrought upon to make this result seem real. What is that which we call seeing except more or less, longer or shorter, vibrations communicated through the cornea, through the retina, through the optic nerve, through the brain, to the mind? Generally, external objects set these vibrations going, but if, under peculiar circumstances, they can be set going from internal causes, the same mental sensations which accompany the seeing of tangible objects will be produced. This is philosophy; but when a man is thoroughly frightened, his philosophy is the first to run. It is the biggest coward in the known universe.

After a long period of agonizing silence and suspension, I spoke to the ghost, but he did not respond. Anyway, he could not have understood a word I said, for my voice had the shakes beyond control.

Gaining a little more courage, I felt for my revolver, and when I had it well in hand I succeeded in saying:

"If you are human, say so, for I am going to shoot."

Silence reigned supreme.

I shot.

The ghost did not wince.

BIG INJUN.

Again I dischargad my piece, and yet again, and again.

The ghost still stood his ground.

What gave me new surprise and further alarm was that

the report of my weapon brought no response from the household of men, women, and boys. A vague suspicion crept over me that my superhuman visitor had already slain everybody on the haunted premises except myself.

"Perkins!" I cried, just to see what effect it would have, and when it had no effect whatever, I called louder and louder; but no answer came.

I was not happy. The few moments seemed a week that I was in the horrible situation, when I boldly determined to die rather than to endure it another minute. Silently I attended to my devotions, and then jumped out of bed and walked straight to the apparition. Instead of vanishing, he loomed up more clearly than before. Evidently he was not intangible, for when I touched him he presented all the resistance of a solid body. And so he was, for, as I ascertained from Mr. Perkins and the boys, who finally rushed into the room, nearly dead with suppressed laughter, I had been frightened nearly out of my wits by one of those wooden Indians which are set in front of tobacco stores, and which Perkins had covered with phosphorescent paint, intending to set the figure in his watermelon patch to scare away night-prowling boys, but which for the time had been left standing in the corner of the room assigned to me for that night.

I was so strongly impressed with the practical utility of this ingenious contrivance that I resolved to purchase it to set in my basement hall, which, on two occasions, had been entered by sneak thieves.

Mr. Perkins felt that my stay with him had not been quite as pleasant as he could have wished, so his heart was melted, and he made me a present of the Indian ghost.

I could hardly wait to get home to show it to Augusta.

When I did get home it was late at night, and my wife

had retired and was soundly asleep. Not wishing to disturb her sweet slumber, I had the cadaverous Indian placed quietly in her room, so that she could admire it the first thing in the morning; and then resorted, with a peaceful conscience, to my own bed-chamber.

There was no good reason for Augusta's waking up until daylight, but, most inauspiciously, she opened her eyes an hour or two before dawn.

She is not superstitious! Oh, no! I have heard her say so a hundred times. Who is? Who is not?

If any one supposes there is going to be anything to laugh at in the conclusion of this account, he will labor under an enormous mistake.

Augusta very nearly lost her reason, if not her life. All the children went wild with grief. We had four doctors at the house for several days, and it was two weeks before the best woman in the world could be pronounced out of danger.

I am wondering yet whether my darling feels the same affection for me that she once did.

Fear is the great enemy of human peace. Often when men have succeeded in keeping alive in spite of foul air, poisonous food, scorching heat, or freezing cold, some miserable fear has carried them off. It will render the blood as acrid as a dose of calomel. In view of these facts, it may not be too much to say that the only instance in which fear may be properly encouraged is in teaching theology or piety. It is perhaps justifiable for men and women to become uncontrollably excited over the tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum of religion, while the great questions of hygiene, on which depend life and death, are scarcely thought of for an instant.

But I can never forgive myself for frightening Augusta.

CHAPTER XX.

A FAMILY JAR.

AUGUSTA used to irritate me by opposing some of my pet schemes. She seemed to forget that a man is a *man*, while a woman is nothing but a woman.

One day we almost quarreled, and this was the way of it.

A farmer brought us a large jar of sweet cream in payment for his paper for one year.

Augusta said it must be churned. I volunteered to borrow the churn if she would do the rest. She made some trivial excuse about two or three of the babies being sick, and insisted upon my doing the heavy work. I was fortunate enough to find a churn at a second-hand store, which I hired for a dollar, and then engaged an express team to deliver it.

At first I thought it would be rather entertaining to watch the butter come, but when I had churned a minute or two, and it did n't come, I called Augusta, and told her there was something wrong with it. She made no very complimentary remark, and soon left me to myself.

Then I set my wits to work, hoping I might devise some easy way of performing the task. I sat down on a pile of potatoes, where I remained nearly an hour, when suddenly a brilliant idea came to me, flashing through my brain like a meteor across the sky. Perhaps it was something of which I had some time read in a penny newspaper, but no matter, it was as good as original in the hour of need,

and had required for its production or reproduction, as the case may be, the entire force of my intellect.

Away I went to Fulton Market, where I bought, for ten cents apiece, a half dozen of the biggest frogs I could find. I thought that if I put the frogs into the cream they would do nothing but kick, in their efforts to get out, and that this would bring the butter without fail.

FRISKY FROGS.

Reaching home, I hurried into the cellar and untied the bag that contained my game. Unfortunately for the success of my plan, five of the frogs made their escape, and I discovered that they were remarkably lively as they scattered in five different directions. Thrusting the remaining one into the churn, I started in hot pursuit of the others. My success was not phenomenal. In an evil moment I called Augusta to come

and help me catch them. Just as she was coming down stairs, one of the big, green-legged reptiles made a bound to go up. To hear that woman scream and to see her turn and run, you would have thought she had met either a band of wild Indians — or a mouse.

From the top stairs of the upper story I soon heard her trembling voice, and knew that she was inquiring into the nature of the enemy.

In order to show my own bravery in comparison with her timidity, I resolved to catch as many of the creatures as I could, and hold them in my hands before her eyes. After some moments I succeeded in catching *one*, and that I took from the churn.

WITH CREAM GRAVY.

With its heavy overcoat of cream, no person would have mistrusted it was a frog, but I thought the exhibition would be all the more interesting on that account.

Augusta thought, as I approached her, that I had a handful of butter, for she ordered me to put it on a plate, when the thing gave a spring, and in its blindness would have landed plump in Augusta's face had she not dodged. This unfortunate movement on her part allowed the frog to sprawl itself across the mouth of one of the twins; thereby creating a disturbance which frightened all the rest of the

children, who at once set up a deafening uproar; while the cause of the alarm kept on in his mad career, marking his course by a zigzag streak of cream over the floor.

Augusta was the first to cool down, although it was a long time before she became entirely possessed of her better feelings, so that she could express that high appreciation of which I was deserving. Meanwhile she declared impulsively that she would never eat any of the butter which that frog had been in.

I reasoned with her, but it was useless. In vain I pleaded that the butter had not come, and that therefore the frog could not have touched it.

"Besides," said I, "it is foolish to object to the use of frog's legs as a churn, when you know very well that if they had been first fried and then served with cream gravy you would have received them with open countenance."

But my argument was lost, for, as Dr. Hammond so learnedly shows, women are not logical.

However, when my dear wife had quieted the last child, and cleaned up, as best she could, the last oily spot on the carpet — the frog having been properly disposed of by me — she became so far self-poised as to promise that if I would not put any more horrid creatures into the cream, she would allow the butter to be kept in the house — for cooking.

But the butter existed as yet only in potentiality.

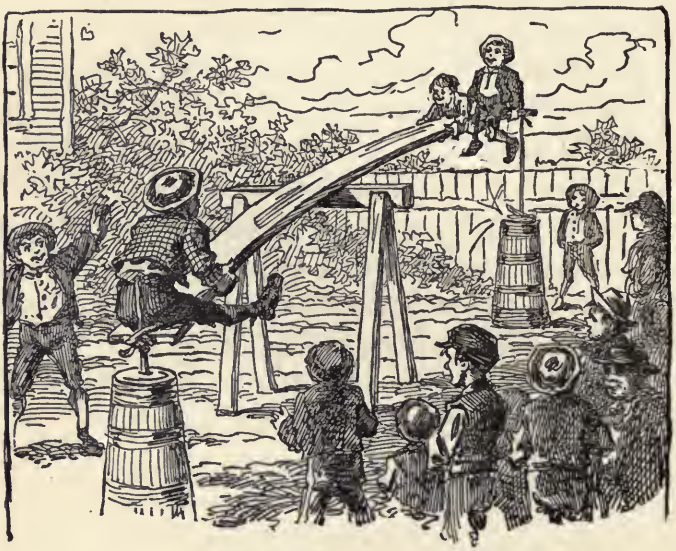
Again I pondered. In two hours a happy thought came. I was overjoyed. Nothing like it had ever entered my mind before. I doubted not that I could patent the idea, and make it pay me considerable income.

The new plan was easily arranged, although it necessitated my borrowing another churn, on the same terms under which I had obtained the first.

Next I hired a man to procure a long-legged saw-horse and a large, new board. Having had these purchases delivered in the alley adjacent to my house, I had only to set the wooden horse on its legs, balance the board on top, and the thing was done.

In less than ten minutes, sixty-five boys were gathered there, having a jolly time with what they called a "teeter."

Under each end of the board I now placed a churn, at-



BERKELEY'S CREAMERY.

tached the handle of it to the see-saw, and then retired to my sitting-room as happy as a lord.

In due time the butter came.

Barring the slight accident which caused one of the churns to be upset and broken, for which I had to pay damages amounting to two dollars and fifty cents, every thing resulted as I had anticipated.

But will you believe it? Augusta gave me no credit for

being smart. She even went so far as to intimate that I was a fool for getting a second churn, when by a little different arrangement one could have been made to operate as well as two.

But I silenced that kind of instinct very quickly by making her acknowledge, after a long controversy, that in the event of my having had but one churn, when that was upset I should have lost the entire stock of butter instead of half of it. My long-headedness having provided for accidents, I was now the proud possessor of one pound and a half of good cooking-butter, which had cost me in actual outlay — but that is neither here nor there. As I said to Augusta, when she had arduously figured up the grand total on a large piece of paper, "Cheap enough, considering all the fun I have had."

A DISCIPLE OF TANNER.

My helpmeet, however, refused to be pacified.

Another thing that cast a shadow athwart her conjugal felicity was that I had insisted on taking a Sunday boarder. She had protested vigorously at the time, evolving the conclusion from her instinct that it would be an unprofitable venture.

Nevertheless, I had carefully reasoned upon the subject, and I had agreed by written contract, and in consideration of advance payment, to furnish Sunday meals to the gentleman for one year.

At the time of the butter episode, we had had him three weeks, at a clear loss of four dollars.

We did not then know, what we afterwards ascertained, that he was an enthusiastic disciple of the celebrated Dr. Tanner, and had acquired the art of fasting six days, in order to be able to fill himself to repletion on the seventh, which arrangement was a profitable one for him.

Ungraciously, if not inconsiderately, as it seemed to me, Augusta repeatedly hinted that I was not a good financier.

"I hope," she said, "that, hereafter, you will collect your bills in a business-like way, instead of waiting for your debtors to bring in country produce."

"Oh, yes," I replied; "you would be very glad to have me away from home the most of the time."

"Write dunning letters," she suggested.

"Now you have said it! I see you understand business. Do you suppose I have not tried sending bills? There is Kill, for example; a little town on the Hudson River. *The Farmer's Guide* has a hundred subscribers there, and although I have written to them again and again, they manifest no disposition to liquidate their indebtedness."

"But is it not barely possible," inquired my spouse, in her blandest tones, "that inasmuch as your handwriting has innumerable special peculiarities which render it illegible except to experts—"

I waited not for another word.

This insinuation in reference to my chirography was the straw which broke the camel's back.

She had already almost scolded about the butter and the boarder, and I made up my mind then and there that it was my matrimonial duty to make her sorry for her thoughtless words.

Without deigning any reply, I calmly supported my dignity while I got myself up in the best possible manner, not even neglecting to put on my high-standing collar and white necktie.

It was not long before Augusta's curiosity bubbled over.

"Where in the world are you going?" she asked.

"Going to Kill on the next train," I replied, sullenly.

"Why do you wear your best clothes?" she inquired, some what sadly.

"Because, first they are my own to do what I please with; second, I please to wear them; third, I may fall in with some ladies who can find something in me worthy of admiration, in which event I shall remain awhile and visit."

SUPPORTING HIS DIGNITY.

"Surely, you are dressed to *kill!*" said Augusta, as I finished my toilet by vigorously shaking a bottle of paregoric over my white pocket-handkerchief, under the impression that I was using my wife's limited supply of German cologne.

"But, really," she added, "you do look nice; and now that you have such a solemn face, you might pass very well for a clergyman."

Doubtless this remark was designed to promote cheerfulness, but, if so, it completely failed of its aim. As I look back upon the scene, I am heartily ashamed of myself that

I could present such a wall of adamant to the blessed sunlight of that woman's noble heart.

Yet she, too, was sad—how painfully so, only woman knows—but she would fasten in her tears with a smile until left alone, and then—but enough of this.

"Do you realize," said she, in her pleasantest manner, "that it is Saturday afternoon, and that if you go to-day it will necessitate your being away from us over Sunday?"

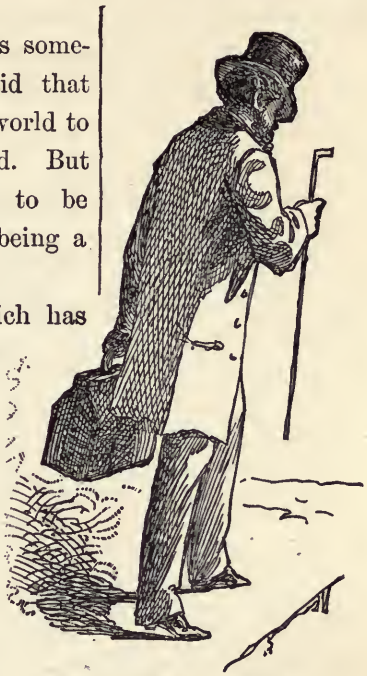
I had not thought of the day, but nevertheless, since I had set my head on being nothing if not contrary, I persisted in letting my fit have its run.

"Yes," I replied; "I am supposed to know what day I have arrived at without being specially instructed. Your woman's wonderful intuition has correctly informed you that to-morrow will be Sunday. So much the better. I can have one Sabbath day of quiet comfort."

Augusta was hurt. Had I struck her a severe blow with my hand, I do not think I could have been more cruel. Still, I was not particularly angry. I scarcely know what I was. I have always been a mystery to myself. Were it not for seeming to speak disrespectfully of my sainted parents, I should openly confess that I was born with a streak of depravity in me, as wide as a ten-pound baby. But being under Scriptural obligation to honor my father and mother, that my days and nights may be long, I suppose it is my duty to say that *naturally* I am a person of remarkable excellence of character. However, my fine quality did not prevent my leaving Augusta without kissing her good-bye, by which unpardonable conduct I made myself more miserable than ever, while she, who had once trustingly joined her heart to mine, for better, for worse, was left to spend weary hours in unspeakable sadness, severely

reproaching, not me, but herself, with every lack in our domestic felicity.

The devotion of woman is something marvelous. It is said that Venus would lay waste the world to save the life of him she loved. But what of him? He ought to be ashamed of himself for not being a better man.



ON A COLLECTING TOUR.

It is woman's fidelity which has saved the Church. Yet it has not always been kind to her in return. The meanest discourtesy she has ever received has come from theologians. Thus a certain bishop, speaking of the evils of the world "for which she alone is responsible," indulges in this poor wit: "Many a man has had his head broken by his own rib!"

Avaunt!

CHAPTER XXI.

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

ARRIVING at Kill late at night, I was about to inquire the way to a hotel, when a gentlemanly colored person doffed his hat to me and politely asked if I was Mr. Berkeley from New York.

"Yes, sir," I answered.

"So I thought," said he, "I'se had consider'ble sperence at dis business, an' I nebber failed to fotch de right pusson."

"Who are you, and what do you want?" I inquired, as he took possession of my grip-sack and led the way to a carriage.

"Ise Mr. Roberts's man. He sent me fur you. Right dis way, please!"

So saying, he opened the carriage door, and in a sort of maze I entered, sank into the luxurious cushions, and was driven off.

In the course of a few minutes the spirited horses were brought to stand in front of a most imposing mansion.

Assisted to alight and escorted to the house by another negro, I was met at the door by the lordly proprietor, who with much flourish introduced me to Mrs. Roberts, and also to their daughter, a charming Miss of some twenty summers; who, to my great surprise, received me with a display of enthusiastic cordiality which outdid everything else.

During the conversation which followed, and to which I contributed as liberally as I could without disclosing my identity, I succeeded in learning that I had been mistaken for a bachelor clergyman, who for several months had been conducting an affectionate correspondence with Miss Roberts;

A WARM RECEPTION.

and that this had been brought about by mutual friends, without the lovers themselves ever having met.

Why I did not reveal myself at once, as in honor bound, I cannot understand. True, I was well pleased with my quarters, preferring them to the hotel. Furthermore, I felt that I was so far into the scrape that it would be difficult to

back out with grace and dignity. I had already told at least a half dozen fictions in trying to answer Mr. Roberts' numerous questions regarding the size of my congregation, the number of funerals and weddings I had been called to attend, and the general condition of my spiritual and financial prospects.

I stumbled along tolerably well, however, until finally Mr. and Mrs. Roberts excused themselves and retired to their

A DILEMMA.

sleeping-room, leaving me alone with the only remaining member of the family.

Here was a dilemma. She was bashful, and so was I. For some moments—it seemed hours—neither of us spoke.

She was the first to muster courage. Striking an appropriate attitude, she opened her pretty lips and remarked:

"We are having fine weather now."

In a few brief sentences I succeeded in conveying the

intelligence to her that in my humble opinion she had told the truth.

Another painful pause followed, in which vivid visions of Augusta were constantly before my eyes.

This time I was first to speak.

"I am afraid," said I, "that I am keeping you up."

"Oh, dear no," she answered, coming a little closer to me.

I leaned the other way.

"Are you disappointed in me?" she inquired, most pathetically.

"Not in the least."

"Do I look like my photograph?"

"Yes, you are a perfect picture of it."

"Why would you never send me your photograph, so I could see what a fine-looking"——

I interrupted her. For Augusta's sake. I could not allow her to finish the sentence.

"Let us drop this subject," said I, "until we become better acquainted."

"Do you think I am too forward?" she asked, her voice apparently half choked with tears."

"No, not that exactly, but I,—I,—I am confoundedly backward, you see."

"Why, how strangely you talk, for a minister!"

"Yes, I am different from most ministers," and then, in order to let her feelings down as easily as possible, I added:

"To tell the truth, Miss Roberts, I am known in my own city as an unmitigated idiot, an unsophisticated imbecile, a beetleheaded booby, a confirmed doodle, a lackbrain innocent, a preposterous simpleton, an egregious fool, an incurable"—

"Oh, I know," she interposed, "that all good ministers are talked against by the wicked world, and that the wiser

they are in things spiritual, the more foolish they appear in the eyes of the unregenerate."

"You would not be silly enough to marry such a man, would you?"

"Oh, really," she answered, stammering and blushing, "your question is so sudden that I must take time to reflect and to consult my papa and mama."

I saw that I was getting deeper and deeper into the treacherous quicksand from which I was struggling to extricate myself. "Let us have an understanding immediately!" said I, determining to tell her the whole truth.

"What impetuous creatures you men are!" she responded gently. "Of course I might answer at once for myself, but papa is rather peculiar, and will expect to be consulted. Won't you please wait until to-morrow, so that we can all hear you preach first?"

I gave vent to a sickly laugh.

"By the way," she continued, "it is quite late now, and in order to do your best to-morrow you will require a good night's sleep. Shall I summons our man Andrew, and have him show you to your room?"

"Nothing would suit me better," I replied.

Andrew came accordingly, and when I had said good night in an absent sort of manner to my fair hostess, I was conducted to a suite of rooms which, so the servant said, had been newly-furnished for my special accommodation. Had I always lived in luxury, these apartments would still have elicited my astonishment and admiration, for nothing was wanting in their beauty and finish which the most fastidious taste could suggest.

A most costly Bible and prayer-book had been placed near the bed, on a table which was cut from a single stone,—that

might have been brought from Jerusalem. A richly-embroidered cushion, placed on the floor near the table, suggested comfort and ease while attending to one's duties, so I immediately sat down on it to pull my boots off. I found that, having walked more than usual that day, my feet had swollen considerably, which seriously interfered with the leathers coming off. I succeeded, however, in removing

LUXURIOUS QUARTERS.

one of them, but the other withstood my most desperate efforts; I finally had to give up the job, and like "my son John" of olden time, I bounded into bed, neither shod nor barefoot, hoping to lose myself in sleep without any unnecessary delay. In this expectation I was doomed to disappointment. Something—or rather a good deal—was missing. I needed the charm of crying babies, and I am sure my slumber would have been sweet and sound, if Augusta could

have been traveling about the room, bringing water, distributing medicine, replenishing the fire, looking after the windows, rearranging sheets and pillows, and fixing things generally. Custom will not tolerate violent wrenching without a protest.

Nor was my conscience quite easy. I had that day spoken harshly to the best woman in the world. I had given her no parting kiss. I had caused her to believe she was the torment of my life; and had left her in an exceedingly unhappy state. Moreover, I had allowed an innocent young lady to bestow affection upon me. I knew she would take it all back the next day, but still I could not hold myself entirely guiltless. At that very moment I was occupying a bed designed for another man. Then I imagined everything imaginable.

"Suppose," I soliloquized, "that the real Reverend Mr. Berkeley comes here before I can get away!" I grew nervous. I got out of bed and gathered together my valuables. Then I put the entire collection—two dollars and ninety cents in money, a jack-knife, a lead-pencil, and a second-hand pistol—under my pillow.

Still I could not sleep. I grew feverish.

Having observed before retiring that a bath-room had been placed at my disposal, I resolved to plunge all over into cold water. In this I succeeded very well, except for the unaccountable blunder of putting the wrong foot foremost, thus giving my obstinate boot a thorough soaking, which I did not intend to do.

Again I courted Morpheus, but with as little success as Miss Roberts had experienced in courting me. However, after a wretched hour or two of vigorous tossing, I lost consciousness.

Suddenly my ears were pierced, and the still air rent, by the harsh sound of female screeching. It evidently proceeded from a room under my own. I could distinguish the cry of "Papa! papa! come quick! quick! hurry!"

I felt sure that the house had been broken into by burglars, and that the heiress of the estate was in great peril.

Although I had never been personally troubled with house-breakers, I felt confident that I knew just how to

A MIDNIGHT SHOWER.

proceed, as I had once written an editorial on the subject, as follows:

"The right way is to shoot off a pistol at random. Then the burglars will run for dear life. This saves killing them. It is a mistake to shoot them dead before they have had a fair trial by their peers. We should exercise charity — as there may be extenuating circumstances; perhaps they are insane."

I discharged my firearm. The next instant I heard some one open a window, and yell: "Police! Murder! Police!"

I now tried to dress myself, but was so excited that I could make no headway; and when some one came to my door, I threatened to blow him into eternity if he did not vacate the premises forthwith.

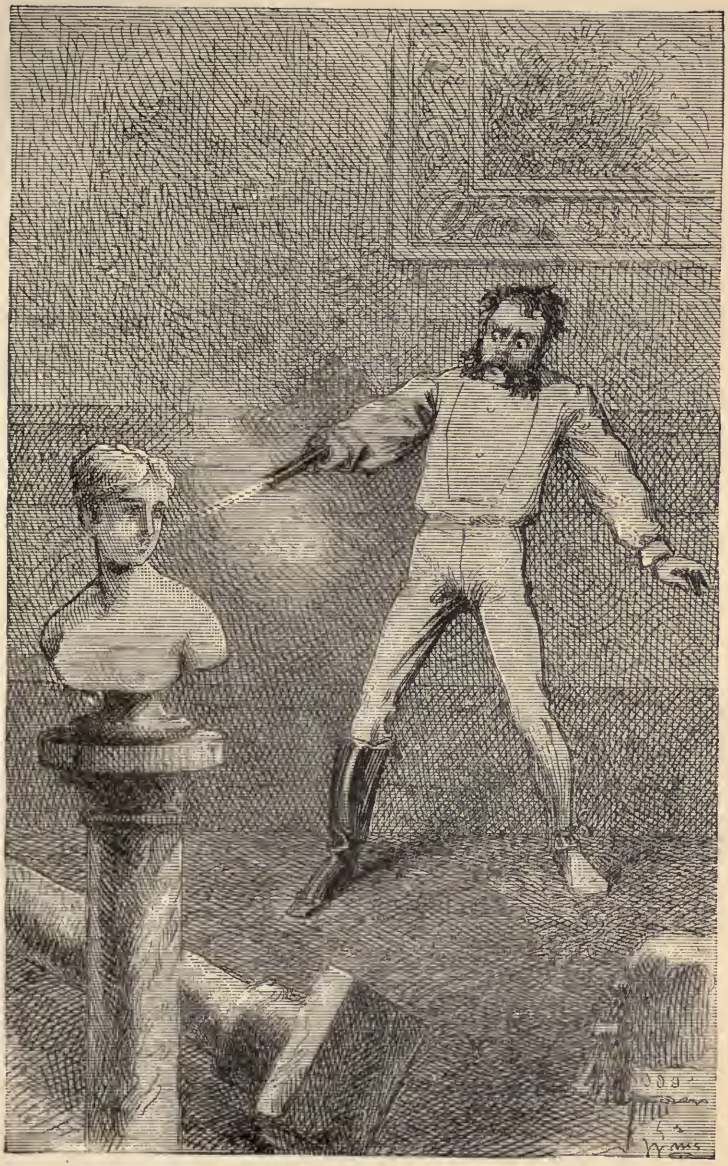
After some minutes I discovered that the intruder was none other than Mr. Roberts himself, who was in search of the origin of the pistol report. I explained, but he did not appear to be well pleased with my account.

He then hunted up his daughter, and learned that she had given the alarm in the first instance because of a great flood of water which had descended into her sleeping apartment, bringing with it the heavy, frescoed ceiling, from the fall of which she had sustained considerable injury.

This was the whole trouble. In taking my bath, I had left the water turned on, and there was no overflow pipe. A flood was the result, while my shot had completed the scare, which brought out the cry of "*murder*" from my worthy host. The case would have been less deplorable had not the bullet, which I had sent flying into the darkness, struck off the nose of *Venus de Medici*, and split open the head of Falconnet's *Peter the Great.*

Next morning Mr. and Mrs. Roberts received me with surprising cordiality, considering what the night had brought forth. Evidently they were determined that no untoward circumstances should be allowed to interfere with the brilliant prospect of securing such a prepossessing son-in-law.

We sat down to breakfast, but although everything seemed to be in readiness for beginning to eat, there occurred an embarrassing delay. The host looked at me pleadingly, but I utterly failed to take the hint.



A RANDOM SHOT.

"We are accustomed to the usual ceremony," he finally said; but I was as much in the dark as ever, and remained mum, wondering why we could not initiate proceedings on the chop before the gravy had all turned to tallow.

"Oh, I beg pardon!" exclaimed the head of the family, just as the situation had become unbearable; "I should have explained to our reverend friend, that our daughter will not join us in the morning meal, on account of her face being considerably disfigured by the falling plaster. Please, sir, give thanks."

I felt embarrassed. True, I was not wholly ungrateful for the calamity that had befallen Miss Roberts, but I did not care to express my feelings in the presence of her parents.

Suddenly the full realization of what was expected of me flashed across my mind with overwhelming force. But what could I do? I despise hypocrisy. As for profanely tampering with sacred things, the very idea is abhorrent to me. I am exceedingly fond of folly. It is my meat, drink, and native air. Without it, life would be oppressively stupid. Yet for the sake of my respect for the sanctities, I can sacrifice some of my choicest foolishness. For me to have said grace at that breakfast-table would have been to publish an act of insincerity in the face of heaven. Besides, I did not know how to start; and, if once started, I never could have stopped. So I flatly refused to ask the blessing.

Mr. Roberts looked horrified. He said grace himself, but with no good feeling. Nor could it have received any answer, for not one of us recovered our spirits. In quiet we drank our coffee, which had become cool. The meal being finished, Mr. Roberts received a telegram.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "Here is a dispatch from Mr. Berkeley, saying that he missed the train, but will

come on the boat. Who are you?" he vociferated, looking at me savagely.

"I am Mr. Berkeley."

"What Berkeley?"

"August, the happy possessor of a wife and six children."

"You are an impostor, and I shall have you arrested!"

"WHO ARE YOU?"

How different his voice, how changed his demeanor had suddenly become. His anger was the lightning's flash, which, in an instant, revealed the whole landscape of his real character.

I talked to him mildly, but his wrath grew hotter and hotter. Mrs. Roberts dropped her superficiality, and joined her husband in giving me a tirade of abuse such as I hope never to receive again.

Miss Roberts, hearing the tumult, now put in her appearance, which was a very sorry one, and from that time on, I

could not make myself heard at all, nor was poor, raving Mr. Roberts much better off.

The young lady declared that on the previous evening I had used insulting language to her, having asked her to become my wife; and gave it as her opinion that I had flooded the house purposely, in revenge for her persistent refusal.

Thereupon her devoted father clenched his fists and came rather nearer to me than was agreeable. I mentally de-

HER APPEARANCE.

clared that if once I got home alive, I would never leave Augusta again.

I cast about for my hat, and announced that I was ready to leave. The gentleman of the house informed me that I should never leave him until I had paid every item of damage I had caused, including frescoed ceiling, costly furniture, and three hundred and fifty dollars worth of statuary.

I thought then that I had never heard the doctrine of eternity put in a stronger way.

Mrs. Roberts said she cared nothing for house or goods, but that I should be made to pay all I was worth on account of my shameful treatment of her precious daughter.

I was glad her estimate of this matter was so insignificant.

The confusion of tongues had not yet begun to abate, when the Rev. John Berkeley was announced.

STEPPING OUT.

My tormentors drew in their quills at once. They received him with fawning suavity. While they drew him aside to describe to him the trouble which had grown out of a mistaken identity, I watched my chance, found my hat, and silently stole away.

Next morning I had no heart for business, so I hastened home without meeting a single subscriber to the *Farmer's Guide*.

Augusta never looked better to me, for I had experienced

a very strong contrast. I gave her a full and true account of my adventures. To which she replied:

"Pledge me this: that you will never leave home again without a guardian."

CHAPTER XXII.

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW.

THIS chapter must contain an account of the most momentous events of my life. The thrilling experiences I have had with my mother-in-law can never be effaced from my memory.

Soon after the occurrences recorded in the last chapter, my wife's mother wrote me a letter saying, that as she grew old she missed Augusta more and more every day: she craved her companionship, and it seemed as if she could not be separated from her daughter any longer. Besides, she felt that in her declining years she needed that daughter's care, and asked if it would be agreeable for her to come to New York, and make her home with us.

I was so anxious to manifest a generous cordiality in my response, that I would not employ the postal service, but telegraphed, "Come, by all means."

She came.

If you will believe it, she had not been in our house much over an hour before she called me into a room by ourselves and said:

"August, I feel it my duty to say a few words to you on a very delicate subject. You will not be greatly offended with me, will you?"

"Certainly not," I replied; "but, on the contrary, shall have all the greater respect for you if you speak your mind freely."

"I have long had a suspicion," she began, "and it is now confirmed by observation, that you—"

CHAPTER XXIII.

JEWELL'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.

POSSIBLY the reader may have noticed that the last chapter terminated somewhat abruptly.

The interruption was caused by the accidental discovery, on the part of my wife, of the particular subject upon which I had undertaken to write. We have just had a quiet little talk, of two days' and one night's duration, concerning the propriety of my going on with it. The result is that I have changed my mind, and think it best, under the circumstances, to drop "My Mother-in-law," forthwith.

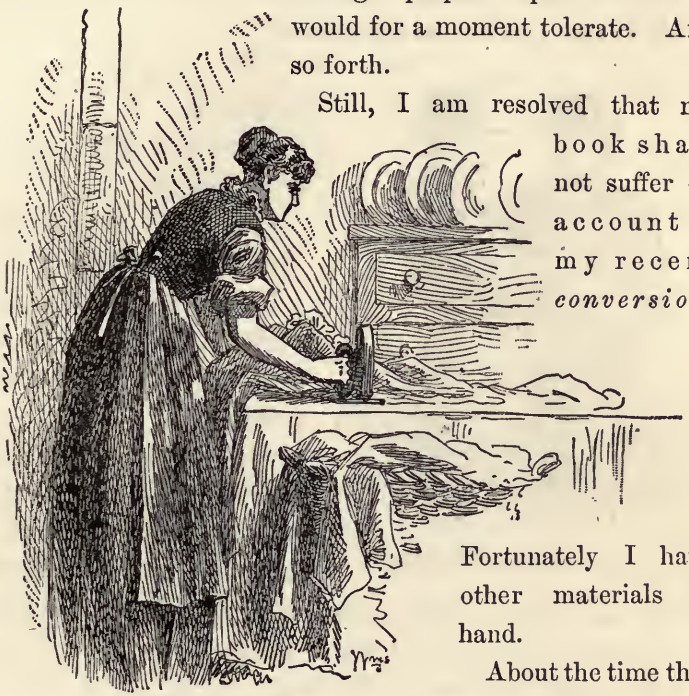
I do not think Mrs. Berkeley is a sound logician, although I am free to admit that she has times of being *persuasive*. I may as well say that her respected mother is a dear, good old lady, without spot or blemish! How quiet the house has now become!

Augusta has her sleeves rolled up, and is working with tremendous energy. She says she is three days behind in her household duties.

I am a little behind myself, in more respects than one. What a singular metamorphosis I have undergone. Away down in the lower depths of my mind, I find myself possessed of opinions which have the appearance of having been recently driven in. They are still hot.

For example, I now hold that the man who will speak

lightly of his mother-in-law is a wretch. He is a monster of ingratitude. He is perfectly horrid. He has no respect for his wife's most tender feelings. He is simply aping those would-be wits whose entire stock in trade is rudeness and vulgarity. Any man who pretends to be a man should set a better example. It is an incivility which no wife having a proper respect for herself would for a moment tolerate. And so forth.



BEHIND TIME.

Still, I am resolved that my book shall not suffer on account of my recent *conversion*.

Fortunately I have other materials at hand.

About the time that my wife's respected mother — bless her heart! may her tribe increase! — came to live with us, my friend Jewell sent me a note asking me to call on him. I complied with his request.

"I am going abroad," said he, "to be gone several years."

"Sorry to hear it," I replied, "for you have been more than a brother to me."

"Thank you. I shall now have the courage to ask a favor of you."

"Anything! Anything!" I responded, enthusiastically. "I owe my life to you, and I remember telling you, at the time you heroically saved it, that I should always be ready to render you any assistance in my power."

"Yes, I believe you did; but let that pass. What I want to say is that I have a mother-in-law."

A STARTLING REVELATION.

"You surprise me!" I exclaimed.

"She is a little queer," he continued.

"Zounds! How very odd! So is—"

I checked myself so suddenly that it took me some time to rearrange my imported teeth.

"My mother-in-law has plenty of property," resumed Jewell; "but she made me promise that I would ask some worthy gentleman to look after her occasionally during my absence in foreign lands."

"Is that all?" I asked, in surprise.

"That is all," said he; "I have now fulfilled my promise by making the request of you."

"I will do it to her heart's content," I replied impulsively.

Affectionately and sorrowfully, Jewell and I separated.

Two days afterward, it occurred to me that he had not given me either his own address or that of his mother-in-law. I began to think he had been playing a joke on me.

JEWELL'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Alas! it was no joke. The woman could speak for herself, as the following letter will show:

Skeetovil newjersey
toozdy fournoon
yere uv the lord

Mister orgus burkly

Deer sur

my darters huzbund tol me you wuz a good feller he tol me he dugg you outer 10 footer sand wen you wuz ded azer dore nale he sed in kornseederasion uv the deed he did you you prommissed too look arter me wile he sarnters threw urup I warnt you too cum twomorry I liv on the besst farm in skeetovil 2 mild sowth uv the ortodox meetin hows the staj bringz you too my dore I fele wee shal be the besst uv frens.

yures respecktivly
Matilda Bricksee late wif uv jonerthon bricksee square

There was something in the general tone and appearance of this letter that did not impress me quite favorably.

However, next day I boarded the first train for Skeetoville, and went forth for the purpose of acquainting myself more thoroughly with my new acquisition.

I found Mrs. Bricksee in a corn-field, hoeing up weeds. She gave me a warm reception, and invited me to lend a hand and hoe a row, which I did.

We worked along together very nicely, interspersing our labor with conversation.

"This ere is the biggest field in these parts," she remarked.

"How large is it?" I inquired.

"Nearly five acres."

This lead to a comparison of one great thing with another, and in order to interest her I told her that Saint Peter's Church at Rome was so large that her entire corn-field would not furnish space enough for it to stand on.

"Looker here!" she exclaimed, eyeing me closely. "You may as well understand fust as last, that that wuz the only fault Jewell had."

"And what fault is that?" I inquired.

"He wuz a tremenjus liar. It led to onpleasantness 'twixt me an' him; an' I would n't be s'prised if that 's th' reason he 's taken his wife an' gone kitin' off to Eurup."

"But I have not told you anything but the truth," I protested.

TENDER RECOLLECTIONS.

"Thar 'tis agin. That wuz Jewell's way to a dot. He wud n't only lie, but he'd swar to it."

I dropped the basilica at Rome, and came nearer home.

"They have just had a terrible tornado out in Iowa," I ventured to remark.

"Never hern tell of Iowa. What part of New Jersey is 't in?"

I dropped the tornado.

It occurred to me I had better let her introduce topics of conversation to suit herself.

She spent an hour and a half telling me about a man's owing her four cents; and she was not through with the subject yet when I accidentally cut off a pumpkin-vine with my hoe. It was really pitiful to see how bad the woman felt, as she tenderly lifted the severed parts.

"What use do you make of pumpkins?" I inquired.

"Bile 'em inter surrup for my barley coffee. My late departed husband wuz passhinitly fond of it. 'T wuz th' las' thing he iver drunk."

"Let us be reconciled. He is better off where he is," I said, pathetically, observing two or three tears chasing each other down her skinny face.

"You're a great comfort to me," she answered. "I'm glad ter see you're posted on Scripter. Now thar's one varse in th' Old Testermunt that's alwuz puzzled my brain. Ken you make it clear to me?"

'WATCH OUT THAR!"

"Most likely I can," I responded, though realizing that in Sunday-school literature I was sadly deficient.

"Wal, what I wanter know is this: The Bible says, 'Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day an' hollered *it*.' What did he holler '*it*' for?"

This was a poser. I confess I had never thought of it before. Still, I would not acknowledge my ignorance, but would make an effort to enlighten the woman.

"You must not understand," said I, "that the Lord holloed that particular word 'it,' for the Record says that

He *blessed* the sabbath day and holloed it; that is, holloed the *blessing* so that all the world would hear it."

"Wal now, that's th' most common sense explination I iver hern. That's wot 'tis to be larned. You'd ought ter ben a preacher. Watch out thar, you blamed idjut; them's water millon vines you're hoeing up!"

I had innocently taken them for weeds, and demolished about half of the entire lot.

Mrs. Bricksee became more and more excited, as the full extent of the mischief was more and more revealed. Her railing was not pleasant. Her voice was high-pitched and harsh. The combined noise of katydids, tree-toads, hens, and parrots would have furnished a very desirable contrast.

When she sneezed, she had a stentorian way of screaming, "HASH-ee," which elicited much merriment from distant neighbors.

"Did you ever go to wot's called a lectur?" she inquired, as I was about taking my leave.

"Yes, I have attended a great many lectures."

"I want you ter take me ter one. I've a great curosity to know wot th' thing's like. I've niver ben any whar 'cept ter th' meetin' house."

I promised I would take her at my earliest convenience.

When I went home I could not muster up courage enough to tell Augusta where I had been, or what I had promised. Neither did I mention the subject to my wife's respected mother. Bless her heart! May her tribe increase! May future generations rise up and call her—a darling!

It is good to keep secrets when occasion requires. The principal use of secret societies is to discipline men in the art of holding fast that which should not be let go. Half the troubles of society grow out of reporting things which

should forever be left unreported, even though they be true.

The early Christians found it good to have secret ceremonies. Chamfort is right: "An indiscreet man is an unsealed letter; every one can read it." But it requires great firmness of character to be able to retain a real interesting bit of gossip.

La Fontaine says: "It is difficult for a woman to keep a secret, and I know more than one man who is a woman." The ancients dedicated temples to Taciturnity. Therein they were wise.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DISTURBING A MEETING.

A GENTLEMAN known as the Rev. Hallmid was to give a lecture in Steinway Hall, and I thought I might as well take Mrs. Bricksee to hear him, and thus fulfill my promise to that eccentric woman.

The subject which he had announced was, "The Bright Side;" and I had every reason to believe he would say some bright things.

I found Mrs. Bricksee laboring with a cold, and I generously presented her with half a box of my Bethsaida snuff. I had been carrying it in my pocket on purpose, anticipating that I might meet some particular friend whom I should desire to "treat."

In reply to numerous questions, I was forced to explain to her that considerable sneezing might be reasonably expected as one of the immediate results of applying the remedy to the nasal organ.

She did n't quite know what I meant, but nevertheless she resolved to put the Bethsaida in her snuff-box and leave it there until such time as she could be alone. She seemed to realize that her sneezing was a one-horse power, if not more.

The lecture did not turn out to be quite as interesting as I had anticipated. There was nothing wrong about it. I

was especially disappointed in not finding that the speaker was a first-class acrobat.

In fact, Mrs. Bricksee was so little interested and enlightened by what was said that, before the entertainment was half through, she was soundly asleep. I had no objection to this until she began to snore. Then, when I discovered that two or three hundred pairs of eyes were concentrating their gaze on us, I began to feel uncomfortable, and resolved to wake her up. So using all the force born of impulsiveness and vexation, I gave her a nudge with my sharp-pointed elbow, and succeeded in getting more response than I anticipated.

"Oh! oh! What on arth's th' matter? Who done that? Whar be I?" she exclaimed, in a voice which would not permit any one else in the house to remain asleep.

I quieted her as quickly as I could, and then explained to her that she had been unconsciously breathing so hard that I was compelled to gently arouse her from peaceful slumber.

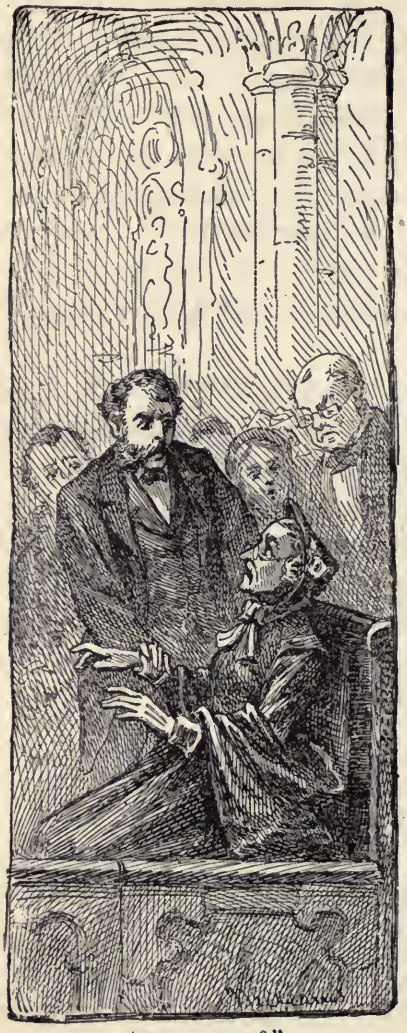
She pledged me her word she would not fall asleep again until the dull performance was over, notwithstanding it was already considerably past her bed-time.

I will give her credit for trying hard to keep her promise; but the oppressive heat of the room and the heavy cold in her head were unfavorable conditions.

She must have been just across the border of dream-land when the Rev. Hallmid, speaking on the importance of "earnestness" in the work of salvation, gave dramatic expression to the following sentences:

"What would you think, if a neighbor should come to your house some fine day, open the gate very deliberately, close it after him, knock at the door, walk slowly into your parlor, take a seat with all due formality, clear his throat,

offer some dull remarks about the weather, and finally say to you, in a drawling manner, 'Sir, I beg that you will pardon me for appearing before you at this time, but the fact of the matter is, sir, your house is on fire.' You would not believe him. Neither do you believe those who adopt this same stupid style in preaching about the fire which is eternal, where the worm dieth not.



"WHAR IS IT?"

"But suppose you were to see a man rushing toward your dwelling at a break-neck pace, and were to hear him utter the soul-piercing cry, "FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!"

"Oh, dear! Whar is it? Take me out!" shrieked Mrs. Bricksee, bounding from her seat, pale with terror.

I clutched her with both my hands, and shoved her back into her place again.

At first the audience was confused; but the moment it realized that the lecturer's perfect acting had completely deceived the old lady into believing there was an actual fire,

it broke forth into most tumultuous laughter, to which was added the clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

Mrs. Bricksee, whose experience at meetings had been limited to the decorous Sunday gatherings in Skeetoville church, was entirely unprepared for this sudden outburst of noisy demonstration, and, getting the idea into her head that the house was falling, again started to her feet in great trepidation.

I succeeded in once more allaying her fears.

Mr. Hallmid resumed his discourse, and everybody in the audience had become quiet, when my companion, in order to tone up her nerves, resorted to the snuff-box.

I had forgotten that it was filled with that explosive Bethsaida, or I should have interfered to prevent a very unpleasant episode. In a moment I saw that she was engaged in trying to suppress an internal earthquake. The contortions of her body were frightful to witness. Large drops of perspiration rolled down her face. Once, twice, three times she conquered. Then the strength of her iron will was exhausted, and she surrendered unconditionally to the inevitable.

Just as the lecturer was saying, "The spiritual nature of man, as well as his physical, must have food," she burst forth with all the power of a fog-horn, "Hash-ee!"

Such a roar as the audience indulged in appalled me. Everybody felt merry except Mrs. Bricksee and myself.

But the worst was not over. The ammunition with which the woman had loaded her double-barreled gun would not be satisfied with a single sneeze. It had not yet finished its work.

"I repeat," said the speaker, "the spiritual nature of man is dependent on food."

"HASH-EE!" came the response, as though a cannon were trying to talk.

"HASH-EE! HASH-EE! HASH-EE!" followed in quick succession.

Mr. Hallmid vainly endeavored to restore order amid the assembled multitude. Nobody could hear a word he was saying, but by the manner in which his long arms and legs

THE BRICKSEE MARCH.

were swaying to and fro in the air, one might reasonably conclude that he was somewhat excited.

I knew from experience that the Bethsaida dynamite was still good for a dozen volleys. I gathered up what little courage I had left, took the old lady by the arm, and marched down the center aisle, what seemed to me an interminable distance, from one end of the hall to the other, while a perfect bedlam of cheering accompanied my every step.

I am opposed to noisy assemblies. Feet and hands are poor talkers. They should have learned to keep quiet when men first found their tongues, and knew what they were for. But even the organs of speech must be modest in the midst of a crowd.

Solomon's temple was built without the sound of hammer. So was the universe. Thus forever works the Infinite. As men come to be more like the eternal model, they will be less disposed to pound the air with their hands and kick up the dust with their feet, simply because something is going on which was not set down in the programme.

When you attend the theater, if you like the players, smile, look pleased, and remain in your place till the end of the play. That will be a civilized way of expressing your approval. If you do not like it, say nothing, but take your hat, and quietly steal away.

CHAPTER XXV.

A NEW VARIETY OF FOWL.

"I OWE you two dollars and a half for my subscription to the *Farmer's Guide*, but can't raise the money to pay it," said a farmer, striding into my office.

"In that case, I suppose I shall have to contrive some way to survive without it," I replied, continuing to write the editorial I had begun.

"You will have to contrive nothing," he replied. "I have brought you some very valuable eggs. If it were not that I am hard pressed, I would not sell them for five dollars a dozen. As it is, you can have the dozen for the amount I owe you."

"That is very cheap," said I, "especially if they were laid by the celebrated goose that had a gold mine in her."

"Look here!" exclaimed he. "I want you to stop that pen a few minutes, and listen to me. I've got a farm worth four thousand dollars, and it is clear of all incumbrances. I will back my word with my farm. These eggs are from a remarkable breed. You will not find them in over two henneries in the entire United States. The eggs are very small, as you observe, but the mother of them weighs more than thirty pounds."

I dropped my pen. "How much did you say the mother of those eggs weighs?"

"Over thirty pounds."

I arose from my chair and walked for a moment.

"Is she fit for the table?"

"Yes, sir. The flesh of her body is of excellent flavor."

"How much does it cost to keep this extraordinary breed?"

"Absolutely nothing. They get their own living, never scratch up your garden, and are entirely noiseless."

SUSPENDED PAYMENT.

"Do I understand you to say that, in case there are any misstatements in your marvelous account, you stand ready to correct them by the surrender of your real estate?"

"Yes, sir."

"And are these eggs fresh?"

"Yes, sir; laid yesterday."

"But I have no setting hen. How can I hatch them?"

"They hatch very easy. You have only to wrap them up and put them under a moderately warm stove, or take them to bed with you."

"And I can have the whole dozen for two dollars and a half?"

"Yes, sir."

SETTLING HIS ACCOUNT.

"I'll take them. If you have any more at the same price, bring them in."

I did not feel equal to the task of hatching them myself, nor did I wish to discommode my wife's respected mother with the effort, so I took them to my adopted mother-in-law in Skeetoville.

She was much pleased with them, and declared with enthusiasm that she had never seen rounder eggs in her life. She had already had some experience in hatching chickens.

On several occasions, the hens on which she had depended to incubate goose eggs had become discouraged before the goslings appeared, and Mrs. Bricksee had kindly taken up the work where the hens left off, and carried it forward to a successful issue.

When I informed her that the eggs which I had brought would require much less than the ordinary amount of caloric to bring out the chicks, she replied:

"Go ter th' dogs with yer caloric; I don't never use it; I foller nater. D'ye think ev'ry old hen wot sets has ter go er trottin' off ter th' 'pothercary shop to git some *caloric?* You 're greener 'n I tuk yer fur."

Several days after this a boy rushed into my office, saying that he had been sent to bring me to Mrs. Bricksee's without a second's delay; that she was not expected to hold out long, and must see me before she died.

Figuratively speaking, I dropped everything and flew.

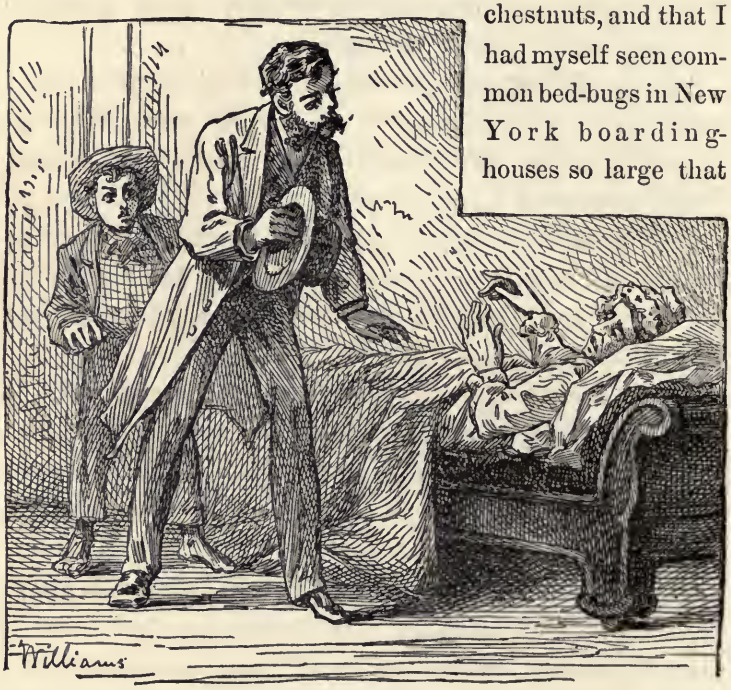
I found Jewell's mother-in-law prostrate on the lounge, evidently suffering from some great nervous shock.

In response to anxious inquiries, all I could elicit from her was, "Bed-bugs! bed-bugs!"

Nearly every woman is unaccountably, almost superstitiously afraid of something. One is ready to faint in presence of a mouse; another will have hysterics over a snake; another will be frightened out of her wits if she meets a cow; and another is ready to die if she finds a man under her bed, although she may have been hunting for him in that very place for several years.

Nothing could find the weak spot in the courage of my adopted mother-in-law except bed-bugs. These were her pluck's poison. She would present a bold front to anything else, even to a burglar in her kitchen at dead of night; but

whenever she caught sight of a bed-bug, she was as mysteriously shorn of her strength as was Sampson when shorn of his hair. Knowing this fact, I had, on one or two occasions, amused myself by relating to her some interesting bed-bug tales, made to order. I had solemnly told her that what are properly called Munchausen bed-bugs are as large as horse-chestnuts, and that I had myself seen common bed-bugs in New York boarding-houses so large that



AN ATTACK OF THE *CIMEX LECTULARIUS*.

many of them would weigh an ounce. *How* many I did not explain.

I thought now that she might be out of her head, as she kept repeating, "Bed-bugs! bed-bugs!" and assured me in feeble tones that her bed was running over with them, and that each one was bigger than a hickory-nut, and that before she knew of their presence, they had fastened themselves to

her with such force that it took all her strength to remove them.

By her persuasion, I was finally induced to go and examine the bed for myself.

I turned down the sheet, and there, sure enough, was a sight that startled even me. I shall never forget it.

FANCY STOCK.

Crawling here and there were a dozen of the cutest little snapping turtles I had ever set eyes on. And there, too, were the shells of the eggs out of which they had been hatched. I saw through it all, and no longer doubted that the mother of those eggs could turn the scale at thirty pounds.

I quietly disposed of the baby turtles, leaving my adopted mother-in-law none the wiser.

With innocent assurance she declared to all persons who came to see her, that she had taken "a dozen hen's eggs to bed with her, and them monstrus bed-bugs sucked 'em clean dry in er single night."

A week later I called again, and found her up and doing, with a voice as strong as ever.

Some friend had just sent a bottle of medicine from a drug store, with the request that she would take it in accordance with the directions on the label. While she went up stairs to hunt for her spectacles, I took the liberty of examining the Latin name of the article, and discovered that, in reality, she had simply gotten a bottle of *brandy*, of which she was to "take a spoonful whenever not feeling well."

IN THE INTEREST OF SCIENCE.

I am not a physician, but I knew as well as reason could teach me that the prescribed dose was much too small. No one could make me believe that a spoonful of *vini gallici* could in any way affect the crude composition of that woman's leathery brain.

Therefore, in the interest of correct medical practice, I carefully erased the word "spoon," and wrote "cup."

Two hours later, I had completely forgotten this little circumstance, as, indeed, I often forget my works of benevolence, it is such a common thing for me to engage in them.

Having missed the stage, Mrs. Bricksee insisted on driving me to the railroad station in her own wagon.

No sooner were we seated in the vehicle, behind two heavy farm horses, than I discovered, to my great dismay, that something was seriously wrong with my driver. In a word, Jewell's mother-in-law was drunk. The "cup" full of brandy had proved too much for her. With one hand she wielded the whip and belabored the horses, while with the other she jerked them first into a ditch on one side, then against a stump on the other.

SOMETHING WRONG.

Our lives were in peril. Vainly I begged of her to let me drive, to which she replied that, as the horses were high-strung, only an experienced hand could govern them. I tried by force to possess myself of the reins, but I might as well have wrestled with a hydra-headed monster.

Finally, one horse became balky, and resolved not to go another step, while the other beast got it into his head to do

nothing else but go. Under these antagonistic conditions something must inevitably happen. It was simply this: The second beast threw himself out of the traces, jumped over the pole, kicked the legs from under the other beast, which knocked him over, and then fell on the top of him, while I found myself generally mixed up with the horses and the broken wagon.

"LOOKS KINDER LIKE IT!"

Some of my New York acquaintances happened to be riding in that section of country just at that hour, and discovered the plight I was in. But Mrs. Bricksee refused assistance.

"Gintlemen," said she, "my hosses can beat th' world on travel. It's alwus this way w'en they stop. That ere man stradlin' round thar is a 'ticular friend er mine. He's Mr. Berkeley, editor of *Farmer's Guide*. He's waitin' on me.

Looks kinder like it, don't he? Hafter wait, I reck'n, till he gits ter years of discreetion."

"This is the last!" said I to myself, as I crawled out from under the *débris* with bleeding flesh and aching bones, and started across the country on foot as fast as I could run, without even turning to speak a civil greeting to my city acquaintances. "Henceforth I will never speak a word to Jewell's mother-in-law. She is the bane of my existence, more terrible to my soul than are bed-bugs to hers."

That promise I have sacredly kept.

Perhaps I had not been altogether sincere and truthful with Mrs. Bricksee. On one or two occasions I had told her things that were hardly so, and they got me into trouble. To tell a lie is to plant a seed that will be prolific of its own kind. Soon or later it calls for defense. Then the defense must be defended. It is like the Irishman's cellar, which was to be big enough to hold all his goods, and all the dirt thrown out in the digging.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS.

I WAS requested by a committee from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, who paid me a visit one day, to give my views on the publication and influence of agricultural newspapers generally, and of the phenomenal success of my own paper, the *Farmer's Guide*, in particular.

"We are none of us practical farmers," said they, who had come to interview me, "and in that respect you have an advantage over us, for we understand that you were born and reared among the honest yœmanry of the country."

"Yes, sir, but a man is not necessarily a pumpkin because he happens to grow between two hills of corn."

"But you must have had a thorough knowledge of agriculture, or you could not be so successful in pleasing the farmers as you are."

"Gentlemen, that does not follow. A knowledge of human nature will result in success, even where there is gross ignorance pertaining to everything else. Lawyers, doctors, and ministers succeed or fail in their profession, not in accordance with what they know, or do not know, about the profession, but in accordance with what they know, or do not know, about dealing with men. The successful merchant must needs be even better acquainted with the peculiarities of mankind than with his own goods.

"In publishing a newspaper, the first requirement is to obtain a good fit. You must cut your cloth to correspond with the particular hole into which you are going to set it. If you get the patch in the wrong place, you are sure to make a botch job of the matter."

"Your illustration may be good," said one of the staff, "but in what precise manner do you make it apply in reference to *The Farmer's Guide?*"

"Well, my first idea in starting that publication was that a newspaper, not on farming, but on farmers, was what was needed. I purposed to tell them plainly not only how to treat their cattle, horses, and swine, but how to treat their brains and their hearts, their wives and their children, their neighbors and their Creator. My plan was to crack jokes enough over their heads to keep them awake while I poured a stream of red-hot truth into their souls. You must get a man open before you can fill him; and it is the opening process that most instructors neglect.

"Take for instance the children of farmers, particularly farmers' boys,—verily, I know whereof I speak when I say that some farmers at least need to be taught how to treat their boys. I was once the boy who suffered the ills to which country air is heir.

"I could not have been more than twelve years old when, one day, my father and I were shoveling sand into a cart. It took us thirty-three minutes to fill it. The elder Berkeley, thinking that I did not do my share, censured me severely, and then proposed to fill the cart next time alone, timing himself by his watch, in order to ascertain just how much assistance I had rendered.

"I did not object to this, for I was perfectly willing to sit on the fence and see the old gentleman puff and sweat.

Having taken the easiest place at the sand bank, he worked as fast as he could, and accomplished the task in just thirty-four minutes.

"'There,' he exclaimed, 'you see now what you are good for! Together we shovel in thirty-three minutes what I can shovel alone in thirty-four minutes. Why, you hardly do enough during the sixteen hours of a day's work to pay for your salt!'

HOW PA DID IT.

"'Let me fill the next cart by myself,' said I.

"My paternal creator consented, and while he went to the house to get his regular drink of sweetened water, with something or other in it, I shoveled.

"In just thirty minutes my parent returned and found the cart as full of sand as it could hold, while I was lying down in the shade of an apple tree, apparently asleep.

"Well, that man cut a switch of birch and woke me up pretty suddenly, and made me dance a jig all over the lot.

"'This,' said he, 'is to punish you for working so slow in the past, when, as you have just shown, you were able to do a good deal better; now stop your crying and tell me you deserve it, or I will give you some more of the same kind. What do you say! Do you deserve it?'

"'Yes, sir,' said I. The answer was a falsehood, and I

HOW I DID IT.

knew it; but when the recording angel set it down, he put it in pa's book instead of mine.

"Another time, it was Fourth of July, and I wanted to join the rest of the boys in celebrating the day, but *pater familias* gave me a stint that would take an able-bodied man until nearly night to accomplish, and said I must finish that before going off to play.

"The work consisted of hoeing the whole side of a corn-

field up to a certain stake which had been used for holding up a scare-crow. I slipped out before breakfast and moved the stake a good distance, so that it would shorten my task.

"It was a piece of deception, but when the recording angel put it down, he put it in pa's book instead of mine.

"It did not come out well, however, for after breakfast my stern parent took me into the field and just as I was beginning to hoe, informed me that I was in the wrong place; that what he meant was that I should begin on the other side of the field, and hoe to the stake. I started to tell him then that the stake had been moved, but, on second thought, I did not want to tell him. There was nothing to do but for me to accept the situation and work up to my boundary, while he himself took the other side. I had no Fourth of July holiday that year.

"My step-mother was not very kind to me, and father was always too tired to caress me, even if he had possessed that peculiarly affectionate disposition which belongs, I think, to city life more abundantly than to country. So I resolved to run away from home.

"Many a boy has thus resolved because home had not the sweet attractiveness to him which it might, and should have had.

"I had saved up a little money, and with this I clandestinely bought a complete outfit of clothes, that I might be respectably dressed on my departure. Secreting my purchase in the loft of the boat-house, into which no one ever climbed except myself, I bided my time to make good my escape.

"Finding that I had no heart to leave as long as I was even moderately well treated, I resolved to remain until there

should be some outbreak of anger on my father's part, against which my nature would rebel.

"Meanwhile, I succeeded in procuring a good wig and a pair of false whiskers, so that, in case of emergency, I could go away *incog.*

"One day my father was particularly ill-natured. If all the bears in the world were one bear, and if that bear had a sore head, he could not have been any crosser than my unhappy parent. He had just discovered that the worms were destroying his cabbages, the beetles his potatoes, the bugs his squashes, and the drouth everything in general.

"Nevertheless he should have remembered that I was his boy, and that nothing in earth, air, or sea could destroy my soul.

"He did forget it, because accidentally I broke a window with a stone while driving the pigs out of the garden; he told me to go into the barn and take off my jacket. I knew what that meant. I knew, too, that the punishment would outweigh the offence just in proportion that his own grievances outweighed his benefits. I would get chastized not only for the broken window, but on account of the worms, beetles, bugs, caterpillars, and drouth; and this was more than I could endure.

"'Go right into the barn!' commanded my stern parent.

"'I will go and drown myself first,' said I.

"He was astounded. It was the first time I had ever dared to disobey him, nor would I have dared on this occasion only for the confidence I reposed in my legs.

"He started to catch me. That was a bit of fun I had anticipated. I ran straight for the river, shouting the while that I was going to drown myself. As soon as I reached the bank I jumped down out of sight, and then ran along

under cover till I came to the boat-house, into whose loft I soon clambered, where I knew I was safe.

"A convenient knot-hole enabled me to observe my father as he walked up and down the edge of the stream in an agony of alarm.

"I donned my new clothes, put on my wig and whiskers, and doubtless looked like a man in appearance, for, notwithstanding my years, I was an adult in size.

IN DISGUISE.

"After a while my father came to the boat-house and called my name. Once he tried to climb into the loft, but he was not sufficiently agile to accomplish the feat. Then he started back to the house as fast as possible. I was afraid he was going for a ladder, so, as soon as the coast was clear,

I bundled up my old clothes, put them under my arm, left my quarters, and pushed on down the river at full speed, till I came to the woods, where, as I well knew, I could conceal myself for an indefinite time.

"I concluded to remain in the neighborhood for a few days and watch the progress of events, for I had a scheme in my head by which I could furnish myself with food and lodging. There was another boy in those parts who was bent on running away at no distant time, and I knew that I could get at him in my disguise, and secure his sympathy and assistance, by promising to find an opening for him in the great world of wealth and happiness into which I was going.

"How strangely my venture terminated! On the very day that I left my old clothes in the woods, they were found by a stray boy, a stranger in the neighborhood, who put them on, and shortly after was capsized and drowned, while boating in the river.

"After a while his disfigured remains were found; and when the clothes had been identified as mine, the body was pronounced mine also.

"Next came the funeral, and I could not resist the temptation of attending it, for my chum said it would be the biggest joke of the season, and avowed that I was so nicely fixed up that never a soul would know me.

"However I failed to see the joke when I observed how pitifully broken down my poor old father had become. I heard him tell the minister that I was the best boy that ever lived, that I had not a fault in the world, and that if he could only have me back again, he should devote his whole life to my happiness. And when he went and stood over the horrible-looking corpse, and shed great burning tears, as he called to me, I could have died of remorse.

"However, I was anxious to hear the sermon. It proved more trying to my nerves than I had anticipated. The eloquent eulogy which the minister had pronounced over my beloved remains was totally unlike anything I had ever heard said of me before. Everybody in the house cried because I was dead. I cried with the rest. I could not have helped it to save me.

THE DROWNED BOY.

"In wiping the tears from my whiskers, I once or twice nearly pulled them off. For the first time I was made to realize how much the world thinks of a boy. Could I have had some of that realization years before, I am certain it would have made me try harder to be true and faithful. I had always felt the need of encouragement.

"When the funeral was over, and my dear father had placed some beautiful flowers on my grave, I could not find

it in my heart to return to the woods. How could I leave so good a parent to grieve my loss? How could I separate myself from the soul-stricken neighbors who had left their work in the very midst of the busy season to come and bear earnest testimony of their sorrow at my untimely death. Furthermore, I wanted to be where I could attend church every Sunday, for I had just discovered what a nice man the minister was, and how fondly he was devoted to boys—especially me.

"I waited till evening, and then took off my disguise, and walked into the sitting-room, where my father sat, still crying, and said I:

"'O papa, was n't that a first-class funeral?'

"He jumped to his feet as though lifted by an electric battery. His fixed gaze indicated that he was frightened. So was I. He thought he saw a ghost. He was not certain but he was a ghost himself. I began to fear I might get the whipping yet. No. He came nearer. He looked into my face for a moment, then threw his arms around my neck and kissed me. We had no fatted calf on hand, but the biggest rooster on the farm was killed that night, and we had him for breakfast next morning.

"After that I was a better boy. The oil of birch had become a thing of the past.

"I believe a great many boys would turn out better if they could have their funerals first, and turn out afterwards.

"Having them at the beginning, rather than at the end of their career, would lead them to the discovery of the world's appreciation.

"When I saw that I was not the only farmer's boy who suffered from the thoughtlessness of parents and guardians, I made up my mind that when I got old enough, I would

start a newspaper in the interest of human kindness. That is how *The Farmers' Guide* happened to have an existence.

"I wanted to say to the public that children ought to be praised for their well doing. *Applied* love is the only kind worthy of mention.

"What a quantity of water may be gotten from certain pumps if one will first pour water into them. How much love may we obtain from human hearts when we begin by loving them.

"There are trees which hold their dead leaves through all the fierce storms of winter, but drop them at the approach of spring. On human life there is likewise much waste foliage which cannot be beaten off by force, but which silently disappears when the life is surrounded by an atmosphere of love, thus stimulating inward growth.

"It is our duty to praise God, but sometimes it is a greater duty to praise man. The Creator needs no encouragement, but men, much.

"Some seeds have shells so tough that unaided human strength is not sufficient to break them. As soon, however, as they are placed in the warm earth, and feel nature's kindly touch, the stubborn bonds are broken, and the freed germ comes forth. There are sin-bound souls which the power of man cannot unfetter. Is it not reasonable to suppose that when what God has said seems to fail, what he *is* will succeed?

"All the men in creation can not force a little bird to sing; but on a spring morning you shall hear the music of a thousand feathery songsters. The sun's quiet influence brings this to pass. Warmth, light, and beauty are nature's trinity, and should be ours.

"'Love prays,' says Mr. Emerson, and he might have added, there is nothing else that can pray.

"One of the first things in creation is oil. It separates bone from bone. There are bones of contention in the moral world, between which there should be plenty of lubricating fluid to prevent the destructive friction which is constantly going on. What is wanted everywhere is that divine quality on which all the law and the prophets are founded."

Hereupon, the committee took their departure, having taken as much information as would fill the space allotted for their report on the subject of agricultural publications.

CHAPTER XXVII.

POLITICS AND REPENTANCE.

THE extraordinary merit of my editorial work had made me numerous friends, and the time came when they determined to elect me to the office of assemblyman.

The idea pleased me, and I pictured for my future years a long course of political honors, ending in the chair of Chief Executive of our great nation. I saw no reason why I might not fill with dignity any office to which I might be called by the sovereign will of our intelligent voters.

My wife advised me to keep out of politics; but I thought I might as well show her and the rest of the human race just what I could do.

Our campaign work was proceeding splendidly, and I was assured by those wonderful political leaders who, at a moment's notice, can always take several thousand "intelligent voters" from their pockets as easily, if not as mysteriously, as a skillful juggler can extract a pigeon or a pig from a boy's cap, that my election was just as certain as though the opposition candidate were already withdrawn from the field. However, nothing was left undone by my bitter opponents. They even went to the extent of impulsively saying some things which were not quite true.

As a general rule, it is not falsities that injure a candidate's cause, but truths, of which there are usually enough to do the work pretty thoroughly.

Arriving home from my office one evening, I was received coolly, as I thought, by my wife's respected mother.

"Where is Augusta?" I inquired.

"She has taken to her bed."

"What! is she not well?"

"No; very unwell."

"I must go at once to see her."

"You must do nothing of the sort," came the reply. "She requested me to say that she would prefer not to see you again."

I was astonished.

"What has happened?" I demanded, livid with—I don't know what.

"Your question would seem to be put as a mere matter of form, and not for needed information," remarked the old lady.

"I must beg of you to tell me what all this means," I pleaded.

"Have you seen the last *Agriculturist?*"

"No, ma'am. That is a paper which I seldom read, for it is actuated by no higher motive than a spirit of jealousy against the greater success and excellency of my own publication."

"Then here are a few paragraphs which may interest you, as they did Augusta and myself."

I took the sheet from her hand, and read as follows:

"THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE FOR ASSEMBLYMAN.

"WHY HE SHOULD NOT BE ELECTED.

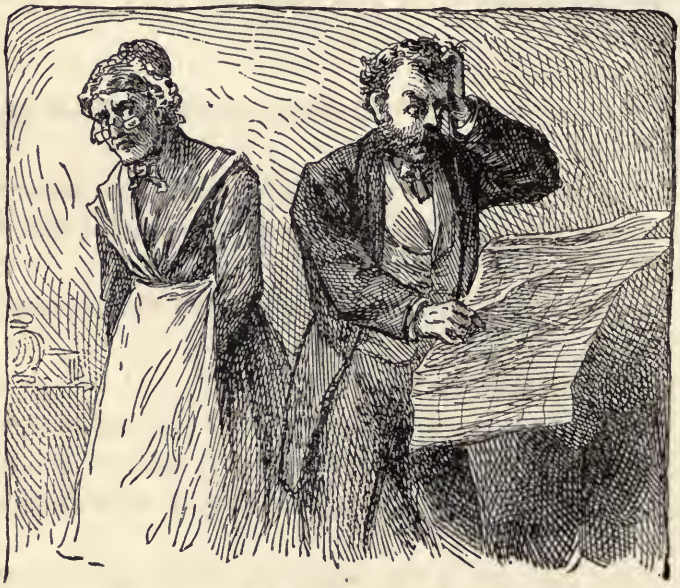
"HE IS GROSSLY CORRUPT IN HIS MORAL NATURE."

Following these glaring headings came the specifications:

"First: On the seventh day of last July, Mr. August Berkeley, abandoning his own wife and children, went into the State of New Jersey,

and secured the company of a certain woman, whom he boldly brought to Steinway Hall, avowedly for the purpose of listening to the lecture to be delivered by the Rev. Hallmid, but in reality to break up the meeting, which, by the disorderly conduct of himself and his companion, was very nearly accomplished.

"Second: On the first day of August, he was again seen in the State of New Jersey in company with this woman, in a beastly state of intoxication. She, then and there, confessed before several witnesses that he was 'waiting on her,' but insisted that he must continue to wait until his arrival at the years of discretion.



THE OPPOSITION PAPER.

"Any persons desiring to satisfy themselves of the correctness of these charges can do so by calling at the office of this paper, and examining the proofs."

Looking up from the paper, I saw the beautiful eyes of my wife's respected mother riveted upon me.

I had but little courage left, but I tried hard to make the most of that little.

"I suppose you know," I stammered, "that this is published by my greatest enemy, both for personal spite and political effect. It is not quite fair to believe all you read, particularly when it issues from such a source."

"True," she replied. "I myself am opposed to receiving any report on newspaper evidence; nor will I ever allow myself to believe anything detrimental to one's reputation until I have given the matter a personal investigation. In this case I have done so. At first, I did not believe these terrible things against you; but having spent two or three days in investigating the matter, I am compelled to tell you, Mr. August Berkeley, that you stand in my presence convicted of the most disgraceful conduct of which any man can be guilty."

I beg the reader to observe how exceedingly praiseworthy was the course pursued by my wife's respected mother in this, my time of greatest trouble. Bless her heart! *she* would not believe any evil of me until she had exhausted every energy of her noble soul in proving it.

The task which she undertook was fraught with many difficulties and disagreeable features; but, nothing daunted, this brave woman, urged on by the stern dictates of duty, accomplished her heart-rending task. What a reproof is her example to those gossip-loving parasites who seize eagerly on every ill report that floats in air, and fear nothing except that it may not be true.

How much better and happier would be our world if it had more women like this one whom my pen delights to honor. Long may she wave! may her tribe increase!

"No," said she austerely, "it would not be right for Augusta to see you again."

Mark, she did not say it would not be expedient, or it

would not be suitable, but it would not be *right*. My wife's respected mother was influenced by nothing but the supreme motive of right.

Yet, owing either to my obstinacy, or to my obtuse conception of what constitutes right, I *did* see Augusta. Alas, how changed! I had left her flesh and blood,—I found her stone.

She did not send me away, but she did not smile; she did not weep; nor did she give any token of her feelings toward me. I could have endured anything rather than this complete passivity. Had she scolded, I could have said to myself, the tide is high and dangerous, but it will turn. But here was no tide, no hope for turning, no promise of change. Nothing is more terrible than the coldness of death — except the coldness of life.

"Augusta," said I, "my political aspirations have now come to an end. I shall withdraw my name from the candidacy in which it has been used. Never again will I suffer myself to breathe an atmosphere where there is so much of moral rancor and cruel misrepresentation."

I would have given the world to have heard her reply, "I told you so!" Then she would have been her dear old self again; but she simply replied, without lifting her eyes or changing a feature:

"Just as you please!"

What did those words contain? I do not know; but they punished me for more than words can describe. I would not have lifted a finger to prolong my miserable existence another moment.

For some time I sat motionless, subjecting myself and my past life to a severe examination and judgment. I could see no saving quality in my soul. Everything per-

taining to my eventful career I painted horribly black, and then inwardly cursed it for being hideous. I sank into utter despair.

"Augusta," said I, in faltering tones, "I know I am unworthy of your love, and yet, now that I have lost it, all my happiness is forever gone."

I waited a moment for her to reply, but the silence of death prevailed.

"My dear wife, I cannot, oh! I cannot endure this any longer! Speak to me! For heaven's sake speak one kind word that I may know there is at least one drop of blood in your heart that does not hate me."

She turned her face from me, and buried it in her pocket handkerchief.

"My fate is sealed," I cried in agonized tones. "I know now that it is your pleasure for me to leave you. But will you grant me two requests? May I come sometimes and see my precious children? Will you teach them not to despise me wholly? Alas, you do not answer. Oh, Father of mercies! how have I sinned, that even these things must be denied me! Augusta, since it must be so, farewell! Farewell to all of peace and joy that earth affords. I must have wronged you deeply; and yet, before high heaven, I will record a vow that I have never wronged your love. To you, and you only, in every thought and act have I given that undivided affection which it is the pleasure, safety, and religion of a true husband to give to his wife. But my folly has destroyed your happiness. For this I deserve the severest chastisement the gods can inflict. For this I am forced from my home into the heartless world. For this ——"

"August, you shall not go," sobbed Augusta, seizing me

by the hand. "Why have I been so heartless? I did not, could not, believe you were false, even when others told me that the evidence was unimpeachable. But I was very

OUR RECONCILIATION.

angry at you for what I called your foolishness. I knew all the time that you were utterly incapable of any perfidity. But tell me, how did it all happen?"

The total eclipse of my sun had disappeared as suddenly as it came. It seemed to me that I was bathed in light, and love, and glory, as I took Augusta on my knee

and gave her a complete and unvarnished account of my experiences with Jewell's mother-in-law.

Augusta laughed, and she cried. Then she kissed me, and called me a fool.

The strangest thing is that she went to work and made out a case against herself. She insisted that it was her own fault that I had not found my home so sweet and pleasant that nothing could have induced me to go to Skeetoville, even for a single visit.

I informed her in the strongest English I could employ, that if she ever accused herself again on account of my consummate idiocy, I should be exceedingly angry at her.

The next day she called to me as I was leaving the house:

"August, will you please send an expressman to get the trunks and take them to the depot?"

"What trunks?" I inquired.

"My mother's. She is going back to Chicago to live."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW AN ANGEL WAS FOOLED.

A CELEBRATED "mediumess" had come to New York from Boston, and was creating quite a furore among a certain class. I was anxious to attend her seances, but Augusta was quite contrarily anxious. At last, however, she gave her consent to my going on condition that I would take her along. We went.

Mademoiselle Rambaneski began the entertainment by speaking a good word for Boston, which she claimed was the headquarters of the Grand Army of disembodied spirits, — a sufficient explanation why all great reforms had been born there.

"The United States of America," said she, "ought to be a Christian nation, for it had exactly the same kind of origin that the Christian religion had."

I elevated my ears.

"You will remember," she continued, "that in the first case, there were originally the master and his twelve disciples. So likewise in respect to our country there were originally *Massachusetts and twelve other States.*"

Never before had I heard such adequate justice meted out to the little land of the Pilgrims.

After the introductory lecture I counted noses, and found besides Augusta's and mine (which according to the logic

of matrimony make only one), about a dozen others, large and small, male and female.

But had I been hit over the head with a thunder clap, I could not have been more astonished than I was in beholding the nose that belonged to an old schoolmate who at one time had fallen on his face, and badly wrecked his breathing apparatus.

He had not caught sight of me yet, and I was glad of this, fearing that he might become so demonstrative, if he knew I was there, that all the celestial visitors would be frightened away.

A CELEBRATED MEDIUMESS.

This danger was happily avoided, for Mademoiselle Rambaneski now ordered the lights extinguished, having first formed us into a "scientific circle." Should any one desire to know what kind of a circle this is, I can only say that it is just the opposite of what you will find in certain old-fashioned meeting-houses where all the men sit on one side, and all the women on the other.

In this case we sat side by side. Augusta was very particular to get by *my* side. I think it would have been even more satisfactory to *her*, if she could have occupied the other side of me also. Then we all joined hands.

The first ghost that appeared was easily recognized. It was that of some murdered music which had been ordered by Mademoiselle Rambaneski.

About thirty minutes we sat in the dark, quietly holding to each other's hands without getting any manifestation, but nobody complained.

The singing was wretched, but nobody cared.

There was not a breath of untainted air in the unventilated room, but nobody thought of that.

The heat was oppressive, but no one deemed it worth mentioning.

We were a reconciled lot, with the exception of Augusta. In more than one instance, I have found her a little hard to please. While we were doing our best on "Home, sweet Home," she whispered to me that I must change seats with her. I felt disinclined to change, —my natural inertia is such,—but as it was not a fit place to argue the point, I consented, and quietly complied with her request.

AN OLD SCHOOLMATE.

The gentleman who had been next to her on the opposite side, was not made aware that an exchange had taken place.

Again we all joined hands.

Augusta has a pretty large hand, while I, for a man, have quite a small one, and therefore they are about the same size. Morever, as I have never been guilty of doing hard or rough work, my hand is soft and delicate.

No sooner was I in my new place, than my new partner signified his entire satisfaction with my hand, by giving it a very warm grasp. The ardor with which he pressed it in

his own was an entirely new experience to me. Then he mellowed it all over with his thumb and fingers as he would an apple to ascertain whether it was ripe enough. I knew then that he had "the wrong pig by the ear."

Occasionally I gave him a slight pressure of my palm in response to his affectionate conduct, which was immediately followed by such hearty recognition on his part, that for

THE VISIT OF THE ANGELS.

the next minute or two the blood in my fingers had no room to circulate.

After a while there were some manifestations. The angels brought flowers freshly plucked. A handsome bouquet was thrown into my lap. I think it was intended for Augusta, but the angels had not happened to see us exchange places.

About this time, what proved to be a beautiful pearl ring was slipped on to my finger. I was very happy.

In due time the lights were struck. Then my demonstrative partner and I looked into each other's faces. I saw that it was none other than my old schoolmate with the battered nose.

He saw it was me.

How disgusted he looked. He said never a word, but stole away into the outer darkness.

I know not why it was, but Augusta went home in a bad state of mind. She declared she would never go to another seance, nor would she even let me go. Perhaps she felt hurt because she didn't get the angel's ring. I offered her mine, but she indignantly refused it. How queerly contradictory is woman! It was the first pretty ring I had had all to myself since I was married. Just because it came from an angel, she scoffed at it. I cannot to this day even mention the fair name of Mademoiselle Rambaneski without having to meet a domestic cloud charged with red-hot wrath.

After all, I believe in spiritualism. It is good at heart. The best that can be said of some men is that they are good at heart, which means that they are meaner than dirt in their outer dealings. What care we for one's goodness of heart unless there is goodness in that portion of him which comes in actual contact with our daily life. I know of a farm which is covered all over with sand, but it is said in extenuation that away down under the sand there is a rich loam several feet in thickness. Nevertheless, the farm is not worth taxes. How different it would be if the soil were on the surface. An apple may be good at the core, but if the outside is decayed, the core will be a drug on the market. Yes, the "Religion of Knowledge," as opposed to that of "Faith," is good at heart. It is often

clothed in fine words. It should be clothed in fine lives. These are the only garments which Heaven regards as beautiful. It expects us to have them on at the grand wedding.

There is much fine gold in modern skepticism. So there are thousands of tons of silver held in solution in the sea; but it is not this thin solution that men want. A coin in the hand is of more practical value than the great earth's diffused wealth. We are taught that God's truth is everywhere in nature; but the universality is of no importance to us until we harness some for actual service.

Old-fashioned doctrines may have been outgrown, but real Christianity, having no fashions whatever, is always new.

There is a complicated net-work of accidents, incidents, history, chronology, persons and wonders, which has been palmed off upon the innocent and ignorant, as the genuine article; but Christianity itself is made up of eternal principles. The way to the first is very broad, and many there be that go in thereat; but the way to the other is straight and narrow, and few there be that find it.

Some persons think that Christianity is dying out because there is so much indifference concerning its claims. They might as well say that agriculture is dying out, seeing that so many men who ought to be engaged in it are idle. When God created man with an aptitude for hunger, he instituted agriculture; and so long as hunger remains, agriculture will not expire. When the same God created man with a heart of love and a spirit of hope, he instituted the church; and so long as man is man, the church is secure.

Christianity in the abstract is not religion. It is like an

apple tree without any fruit of its own. Each sect grafts on its favorite scion, till the tree becomes like Joseph's coat,—of many colors,—and brings forth apples sour and sweet, great and small.

Christianity is naught but the grand foundation on which man may stand to the best advantage while making the most of his selfhood. No angel can do for him what it is his duty to do for himself. He must answer his own questions, work out his own problems, give careful heed to his own inner consciousness, and thereby receive the discipline which effort alone can give.

The heart is like a chalice, on the inside of which are engraved the words: "There is a God; man is immortal." But the cup is too often filled with a dark fluid which makes the writing illegible. It is only necessary to clarify the contents by putting purity in the place of sin. This is far better than stretching our ears in the endeavor to catch ghostly words.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LIFE-INSURANCE AND DEATH.

"WHAT a queer set of humbugs modern astrologers are!" remarked Augusta.

"Yes; but somehow their predictions are often fulfilled," I replied.

"For that matter, so are yours, or mine, or anybody's."

"That may be; but nevertheless I believe there are fortune-tellers who can read the future with unerring certainty."

"Well, then, let us put the matter to the test," replied Augusta. "I have just found, among some of the old papers left here by my mother, one that contains the horoscope of my own destiny, as made out by an astrologer when I was an infant. It says:

"'This child will have an eventful life.'"

"So you have had," I interposed.

"'She will be married between the age of nineteen and twenty-four.'"

"So you were."

"'Her husband will be a professional man.'"

"So I am."

"'He will be good-natured, but extremely unwise.'"

To this I made no reply.

"'He will never be sent to an insane asylum, although if

he should be once there he would have difficulty in finding a physician who would recommend his discharge.'"

To this, also, I made no reply.

"'He will die rich.'"

"I have always told you so," I ejaculated.

"And I have never believed it, and don't now," replied Augusta, somewhat discourteously, as I thought, without raising her eyes from the paper.

THE HOROSCOPE.

She continued to read:

"'His widow, *as a widow*, will experience her most peaceful days, and be surrounded by a large number of children.'"

"Just so!" I exclaimed, thinking only about the children.

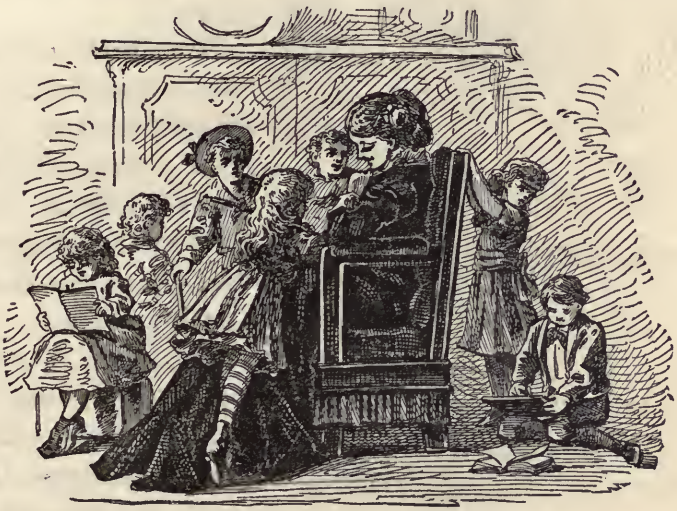
"'She will be left a widow within four years of her bridal day.'"

I turned white. According to this, I had but one year more to live.

Augusta laughed, although she is not the least bit heartless. But she is wonderfully practical. Not a drop of her blood, either from nature or education, is superstitious.

I am differently constituted, and have been differently trained. Both my father and mother accepted the entire

code of signs and wonders. Moreover, I have known many cases where the necromancer's prophecy has been verified to the letter. Besides, I am persuaded that superstition, within certain limits, is strictly in accordance with the fitness of things. It is the ground-work of all our faith in spiritual concerns. Find a child who is wholly devoid of superstition, and you have found one who will come up without believing in God or immortality. Yet it does not



HER MOST PEACEFUL DAYS.

follow that these lofty conceptions are superstitions. The explanation is this: The superstitious soul learns the art of using its wings without the aid of reason. At first it flies low. But the same wings which carry it over malarial marshes will, in the end, convey it to the sunlit heights of eternal truth.

At the time of which I write, my own spirit was evidently hovering over a swampy region. I was worried. However, I tried to conceal my feelings from Augusta. I was too

proud to let her know that I really believed I must die in less than twelve months.

Remembering that my own mother had taken me at a very early age to a spiritual medium to have my fortune told, I resolved to get possession of that record, also, in order that I might compare it with the one belonging to Augusta.

CORROBORATING EVIDENCE.

My mother was dead, but I knew that my oldest brother had taken charge of her private effects. To him I wrote, asking for the paper on which my fate was penned.

He sent it. To my amazement, it was remarkably correct in its prognostications, except on such minor points as, for example, that my nondescript character would bring much trouble to my wife.

Then I came to the presage of my decease. For a moment my heart ceased to beat. The oracle had foreseen that I would die at eight o'clock, on my thirtieth birthday. I had just passed my twenty-ninth. Here was the testimony of two seers to the same forthcoming event. The last lingering hope was driven from my heart. I felt the posi-

tive conviction that my time was near at hand. Still, I would not unfold my feelings to Augusta. Not for the world would I share with her the chilling mantle that shrouded my drooping spirits. In her light-heartedness, she had even forgotten the terrible warning of her own sphinx.

To make fit preparation for death was now my only concern. I stopped smoking—stopped it several times; for I would often be so absorbed in theological study as to light my pipe without realizing what I was doing.

I no longer chewed cloves, coffee, parched-corn, sweet-flag, or kindred groceries, which may be had gratis after a five-cent outlay. I went to church every Sunday, except when the *Sunday Herald's* weather report announced that, in New York and vicinity, cloudiness might be expected, and possibly rain.

So comforting did I find the preaching of the Rev. Selah Brownell that I preferred listening to it, even to staying at home and "minding" the half-dozen babies.

Week-day evenings, instead of squandering money at wicked amusements, I attended revival services, where a new three-cent piece dropped into the contribution-box would receive as kindly a smile as would a dollar and a half from the evil spirit who presides in the box-office of a theater. I found that it was far cheaper to go to heaven than to go through the world.

One night the minister asked me to get up in meeting and relate my experiences. Not knowing exactly what to talk about, I selected Jewell's mother-in-law, she being my greatest experience, and the one most recent. The audience, for the most part, appeared pleased with my few feeble remarks, but the minister uncivilly cut them short in their incipiency

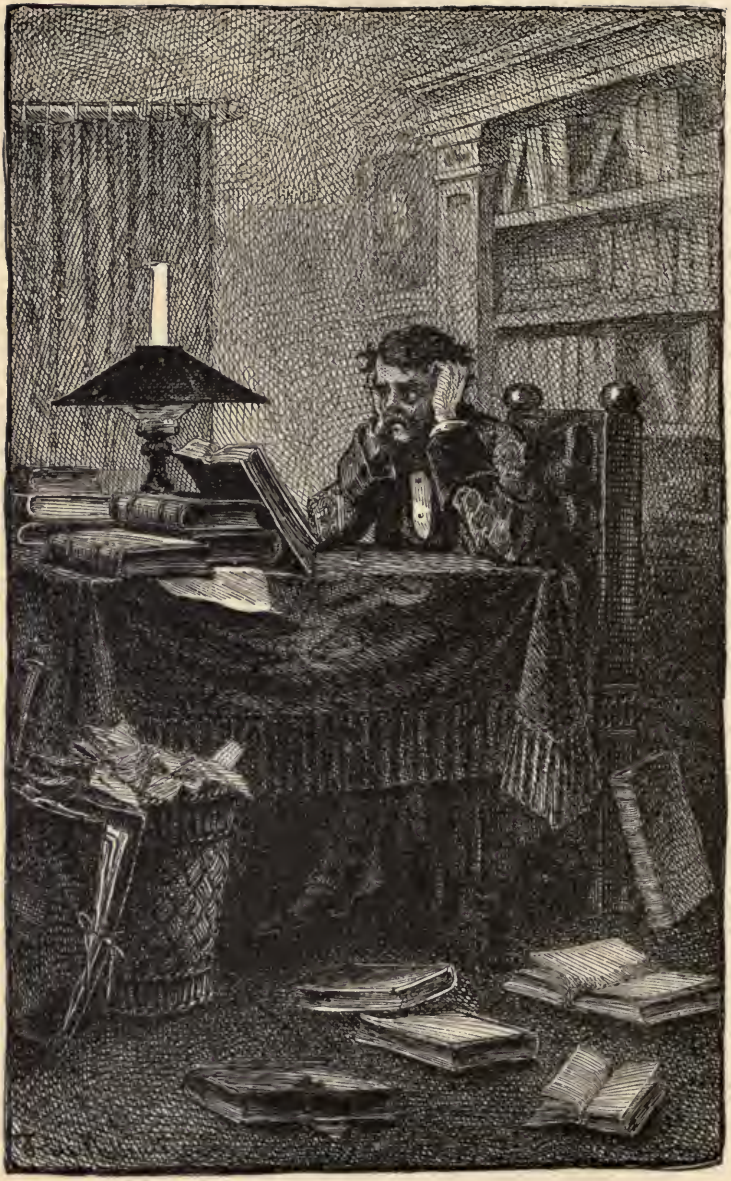
by giving out a hymn, and asking the congregation to join in singing. I knew by my feelings toward him that I was not yet prepared for my final departure.

On the way home, I fell to thinking of the shortness of my remaining time, and of the necessity of doing everything in my power toward providing for the wants of my family. The idea of getting my life insured suddenly flashed upon

EXPERIENCE MEETING.

me. It grew upon me. I would get a fifty-thousand-dollar policy—yea, a hundred-thousand-dollar policy. I would surprise Augusta with a fortune after my demise.

The next day I sold *The Farmer's Guide* and all its rights and belongings; sold my printing stock and office furniture, including the white monkey. I took all the proceeds, and went to the various life insurance companies, and invested



PREPARING FOR DEATH.

in policies until the last cent was expended, and I was insured for one hundred thousand dollars. The doctors asked me all sorts of questions, but, fortunately, no one thought to inquire if I had received evidence from astrologers that I was soon to die; so I had no false statements to make, and was able to retain a clear conscience. True, I was swindling the insurance companies, but it did not once occur to me that there was anything wrong in that. I had heard many sermons, but no clergyman to whom I had listened ever said a word against taking advantage of a life insurance company.

I imagined I had done the good thing which would bring me a rich reward in eternity. I pictured Augusta as deeply affected by my wise and affectionate forethought when she should suddenly find herself a wealthy widow. She would know then how I had loved her.

However, I was not quite certain that I was ready for death. I resolved to leave nothing undone toward securing my everlasting safety.

With this end in view, I committed to memory the *Thirty-nine Articles*, the one hundred and seven questions and answers of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, the *Ten Commandments*, the hieroglyphics of our *Central Park Egyptian Obelisk*, and the longest, the shortest, and the middle verse of the Bible. Then I demonstrated by actual count that the word "*Lord*" is used in the Holy Scriptures one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three times.

I read with severe attention such works as the *Talmud*, *Genealogy of Melchizedek*, *Tenets of the Schwenkfelders*, the Apocrypha, twenty volumes of *Acta Sanctorum*, Emanuel Swedenborg's *Heaven and its Wonders and Hell*, and forty-seven pages of a hand-book of English *Ecclesiology*.

The result of my close application to these pious authors became manifest in my loss of flesh and cadaverous appearance. Hour by hour I wasted away, until my skin embraced my bones with little interference. My wife became alarmed. A medical consultation was held. Some thought there was too little water in the stomach, others that there was too much in the brain. Some said I ought to go South. Others advised the North. The wiser ones said my malady was wholly mental and could not be reached by ordinary *Materia Medica.*

WASTING AWAY.

No one knew what my real trouble was except myself—and I would not tell.

As the day of my dissolution approached, my bodily symptoms began to correspond with my mental condition. I had no appetite. A dangerous fever came on. The physicians acknowledged that my case was critical, and ceased speaking hopefully to my wife. She was bowed down with grief. At my bedside she tried to smile and speak cheerfully, but I could see the agony behind her tears.

I had a presentiment of my death. This made three witnesses, all equally trustworthy. My presentiment was that my life would be spared till the last moment of the allotted time. I should die at eight o'clock the evening of my thirtieth birthday. I was born at eight o'clock in the evening. My mother had died at eight o'clock in the evening on her sixtieth birthday. I saw with great clearness that one-half

of sixty was thirty. All the prominent events of my life had occurred at eight o'clock in the evening. I was to have been married at seven, but fate secreted the matrimonial license, and delayed the wedding an hour. My wife's respected mother had arrived at our pleasant home at eight o'clock in the evening.

The day came that was to be my last on earth. Sorrowing friends stood about my couch almost killing me with their misguided kindness.

THE LAST FAREWELL.

At six o'clock in the afternoon, I became too weak to converse except a few broken words. At fifteen minutes past six my feet grew cold. Five minutes later I had a severe chill. At half past six I refused brandy and water. Fifteen minutes before seven, I called for the six babies, and gave them my dying blessing. I beckoned to Augusta to receive my final farewell; but she was so overcome by

her feelings that the attending physician was obliged to hasten to her assistance.

At seven o'clock, the Rev. Mr. Brownell having heard that I was about to be launched into eternity, came into the sick room and began administering what comfort he could. To him I explained with all my remaining breath how fate had decreed, by three infallible witnesses, that I must cross the Stygian ferry, and that eight o'clock was the exact time when the expiration would occur.

He tried to convince me that I was laboring under a delusion, but his effort was a failure. I assured him that if I should not have departed this life by the time the clock should finish striking eight, I would never have any more faith in predictions or presentiments.

How unconcerned is early childhood in the weighty matters of eternity! Little Susie was our eldest child, having been brought to us in a basket. She was a very precocious little four-year-old, and full of prattle. I had given her a solemn farewell, and told her she could never see her papa alive any more, but evidently she had not comprehended my words.

Leaving me, she joined some older playmates on the street. Pretty soon she returned to my side bubbling over with enthusiasm. Somebody had given her one of those toys called the "Fifteen Puzzle." Until then, I had never seen it. She begged of me to do it for her. It looked easy. How could I turn away from the sweet little child, realizing that it was a last request to a dying man? So, taking hold of the little blocks with my skinny fingers, I began shoving them about, while Susie was intensely interested. In a little while, I began to get interested myself. It perplexed me to see how near I could come to success without reach-

ing it. Summoning all my power into one resolution, I whispered, "Wait a few minutes, Susie, I will get this done before I die."

My ruling propensity, strong even in death, is, as the reader well knows, concentration. In attending to any one thing, I forget everything else. That fifteen puzzle took the whole of me, and needed much more. Once absorbed in

A LAST ACT.

that, I became utterly lost to all the world besides. Time after time I reset the pieces and renewed the struggle.

Eight o'clock, nine o'clock, ten o'clock came, but I was insensible to the flight of time. I had actually forgotten to die. The fifteen puzzle had beaten the prophets. Or, shall I be more grateful, and confess that the little waif whom I had saved from the unpitying world had now saved me?

My superstition was gone. With remarkable rapidity I recovered my health.

My wife's rejoicing was boundless. But, alas! I was compelled to break the sad news to her which was weighing heavily on my own mind.

"Augusta," said I, "*The Farmer's Guide* is lost to us. I sold it out, and invested the proceeds in life insurance policies, which must now be forfeited. I had planned to leave you one hundred thousand dollars more than we already possess. But I did not die when my time came, and the entire amount is lost. Just my miserable luck!"

"JUST MY LUCK!"

"August," said the dear woman, putting her arm around my neck, "we have still enough left to make us comfortable through life without ever doing any more work. But I would a thousand times rather have you, even without a penny, than to secure the wealth of a Vanderbilt, and be separated from you."

"Your precious love shall be my religion," said I; "and henceforth I will honor it by the best life I can possibly lead."

It is said that a certain place is paved with good resolutions. I myself have furnished enough to macadamize a road from New York to Jerusalem.

There is a great ship in the harbor, and the fireman is now putting coal in the furnace, and the engineer is polishing the machinery. Is this what the ship was made for? To-morrow will the fires be again kindled, and the metal again be cleaned? Day after day and year after year shall this be repeated, until at last the vessel rots where it lies? Such is my poor life. Probably it was designed for a glorious voyage; but, notwithstanding my forever getting ready to start, I am still in the dock.

I lack application. It is everything. What good is accomplished by stirring dough unless it is finally converted into bread. He knows enough already who knows how to make right use of what he knows. Wisdom is better than knowledge.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW I LOST A GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENT.

I BOUGHT a house on one of the avenues in New York, and after having it nicely furnished, moved my family into it, intending to settle down and spend the rest of my days midst love and ease. But after about a year of undisturbed quiet, I became restless.

I fear that Heaven itself would not satisfy me more than a year and a half, unless it differs from those descriptions which it has been my misfortune to hear.

I yearned for some kind of excitement. I wanted to be the hero of incidents, accidents, and achievements. For a time I had my mind set on going to the North Pole in a balloon, but Augusta would not hear to that.

Then I became ambitious to secure a foreign mission. For this purpose I wrote to the President of the United States, urging my fitness for the position.

He replied that he regarded my claim with favor, and requested me to call at the White House the next Monday evening at nine o'clock sharp, in order to avoid the rush.

"What do you suppose he means by this reference to *the rush?*" I said to Augusta.

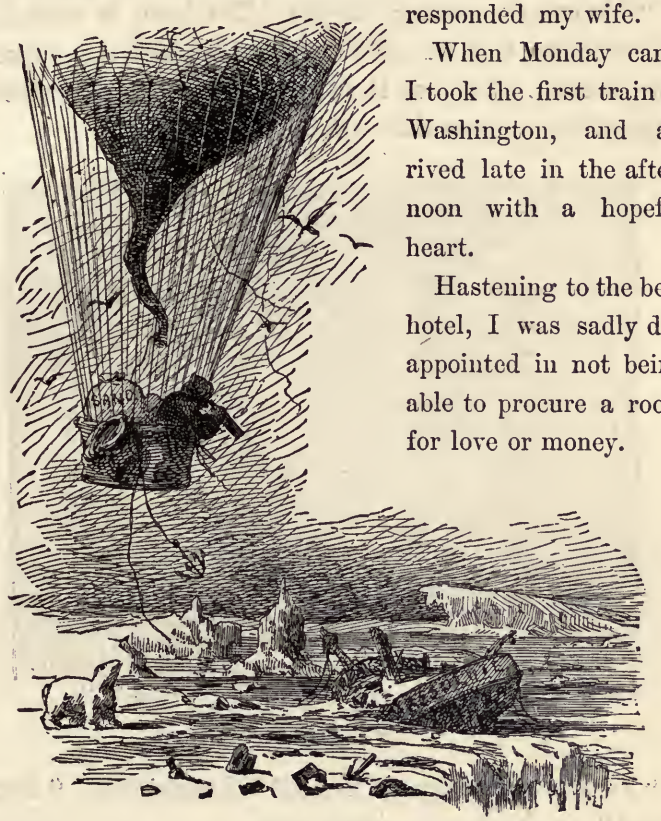
"I cannot imagine," she answered, "unless it be that, since he has been recently inaugurated, there may be others also seeking to obtain appointment to office."

"Can it be possible," I asked, "that this country has any considerable number of persons who deem themselves qualified for the position of representative to a foreign court?"

"Perhaps the number is larger than you apprehend," responded my wife.

When Monday came I took the first train to Washington, and arrived late in the afternoon with a hopeful heart.

Hastening to the best hotel, I was sadly disappointed in not being able to procure a room for love or money.



BEING A HERO.

I whispered in the clerk's ear that I was August Berkeley, and that I had been sent for by the President of the United States, who wished to consult with me on the affairs of nations. I had expected this information would so overwhelm his conceit that he would bow before me in abject humility, while giving me the assurance that the private

parlors of the house would be immediately put in order for my convenience.

No such effect was produced. He simply said with a haughty air of contemptible indifference:

"We can do nothing for you. The town is so full of office-seekers that an honest citizen has scarcely room to turn around. Look at that register with its twenty-seven pages filled up since this morning."

"ALL FULL!"

"Twenty-seven pages of names!" I exclaimed. "Impossible!"

"No, not names," said he, "but titles. The names themselves occupy a very small portion of the space."

I applied at all the other hotels, but with no better success. Surely, the multitude that considered themselves worthy of filling the highest position within the political gift of the nation, was alarmingly great.

What should I do? To go to a boarding-house was beneath my dignity. I had brought my best clothes in a trunk, and it was necessary that I have some place other than the street in which to effect my toilet.

Wandering about, I noticed a placard on a front door, which read:

"*This cottage to rent. Completely furnished, and ready for occupancy. Inquire within.*"

I inquired.

Only one woman was there, and she was impatient to leave.

INQUIRE WITHIN.

Two nights before, a sad thing had happened in the house. It was entered by burglars, and a servant who attempted to capture one of them, was murdered. The family who lived there being of a very nervous temperament were so overcome by this dreadful event, that the doctors advised their removal from the premises.

A reward of two thousand dollars had been offered for information leading to the conviction of the murderer, and it was announced that owing to the vigilance of the police, he must be secreted at no great distance from the place where the crime was committed.

Notwithstanding this thrilling account which I received from the woman, who with considerable bravery had occu-

pied the house for two days — but not nights — for the purpose of disposing of the property to the best advantage, I consented to take possession of it at once, and for this privilege I paid a month's rent in advance.

I tried to obtain a valet, but owing to the innate superstition of uneducated servants, and to my limited time, my efforts were futile.

Being left the sole occupant of the cottage, I was surprised myself at discovering within my own breast a somewhat indefinable discomfort; especially as the shadows of evening began to fall, and the timbers and floors began to creak — as they will in a house where the fires are neglected — I almost repented of my bargain.

Nine o'clock sharp, was the appointed time for meeting the President, and it was now half-past eight.

I had dressed myself in my best habiliments, including my tightest boots, and arranged my rooms very orderly, being determined to bring back a senator or two, or at least a Judge of the Supreme Court, to spend the night with me.

This done, I locked the door and rushed down stairs.

"Idiot!" I exclaimed to myself, as I reached the street, "I do believe I am only half-witted to-night, for I have left the windows open, the gas burning, and my letter from the President, which must serve as an introduction, in my other coat.

Back I rushed, unlocked the door, pulled it open, and immediately I was transfixed with fear. I do not exaggerate when I say that my heart entirely ceased to beat, and every hair of my head stood on end. In that instant I had seen the fluttering of the counterpane which covered the bed, extending to the floor on either side, and had distinctly

caught sight of the soles of two boots as they vanished from view beneath the bed.

I have always been a coward where burglars and robbers are concerned. It results, I suppose, from the blood-

TRANSFIXED WITH FEAR.

curdling fictions told me when a little child by my old witch of a nurse.

As soon as I could move, I withdrew from the room and locked the door. Not satisfied with this, I brought a lounge and several chairs from an adjoining room, and braced

them against the door, till I had completely filled the passage-way, so that by no possible means could the door be forced open into the hall. Then I paused to get breath and reflect.

"Two thousand dollars," I soliloquized, recalling the offer which had been made for the capture of the malefactor. "I will make a present of it to Augusta, and then won't she be proud of her hero when she learns how I obtained it."

AN EXCITED BOY

Hastening into the street I hailed the first man in sight, told him about the burglar in my chamber, and bade him watch the room and be ready to give the alarm in case anything should happen.

Furthermore, I engaged a boy to stay on the sidewalk, to see that the desperado did not throw himself from the window and escape. Then I started for police headquarters, where I gave a thrilling account of my adventure, and as I was determined not to lose full control of the reward, I made a special arrangement with officer Matson, whereby he should act only as my agent and I should be considered the sole principal in the capture.

After great haste in getting back to the cottage, we were met by the boy whom I had left in charge of the street department, and he informed us that "jest sure as

THE HILARIOUS OFFICER.

guns" he had seen the big burglar appear twice at the window. And when, next moment, we met the man whom I had placed at the head of the stairs, he assured us that although the villian had not kicked any at the door, he had plainly heard his footsteps on the floor.

Cautiously we removed the barricade—though I was so unfortunate as to make an ugly rent in my coat—and when everything was in readiness, officer Matson grasped his revolver in one hand, turned the key with the other, and suddenly pulled open the door. What? There was the same fluttering of the coverlet, and the same boots in the same place.

In a second of supreme agony, the whole truth flashed upon me. I had changed my boots; and in putting the room to rights in the most approved style, had shoved my old ones under the bed, and in opening the door a draft had been produced which caused the white spread to move rapidly over them.

When officer Matson learned this, I verily feared he would raise the whole city with his aggravating laughter.

No, indeed, it was no laughable matter to me. I put a roll of bills into the officer's hands, and said:

"Understand me, sir; this thing must not be made public."

"Of course not," replied officer Matson, "but the fact that you thought you had the burglar is already out, and spreading like wild-fire in every direction."

"So it is," I answered, "and that part of it cannot be stopped, but that I was frightened half to death at my own boots, is something that no one yet knows except you and me, and it must never go further."

"Certainly not," responded Matson, "but I shall be

asked all manner of questions about the burglar; and what shall I answer?"

"I don't know," said I, "but you must make up something, anything, and I will not deny your statement of the case, put it how you will."

"Pledge me this on your honor?" said he.

"I pledge you," said I.

It took me half an hour to find a decent coat, after which I entered a Herdic and was driven to the White House.

Too late. The President had gone to bed. The night watchman refused to wake him.

Nor could I find any senators or judges lying around loose who would accompany me to my house.

I returned crestfallen and alone, resolving, however, to see the Chief Magistrate early next morning.

Next day, I was compelled to wait until a late hour for the Chief Executive to get up and dress himself.

At last I succeeded in obtaining an audience.

To my surprise, the President received me with a most freezing air.

"If you had come last night," said he, "you would have received an enviable appointment, but how can you have the face to intrude yourself upon me since the disgraceful affair concerning which the papers of to-day give a full account.

I staggered.

The President glared at me savagely.

"You must admit," I stammered as soon as I could partly recover my composure, "that no moral turpitude attaches to my recent conduct."

"Perhaps you think so," said he scornfully, "but when a

man has become so addicted to strong drink that he allows himself to get drunk before the public, he is not exactly what we want as a representative of our glorious nation."

"I am glad to hear it; but who says I was drunk?"

"Did you not run through the streets pretending that a burglar was in your bed-room?"

"Yes; but who says I was drunk?"

"Officer Matson."

"Officer Matson is a li—."

"Be careful sir; he is a relative of mine. I have seen him myself, and he says you could not deny his statement."

True enough. I had promised Matson I would not deny any version of the affair he might choose to offer.

There was nothing for it but for me to bid the President a long farewell.

That day I vacated my cottage and returned to New York, giving Augusta a detailed description of my misadventure.

She was not astonished.

CHAPTER XXXI.

VICTORY OF THE WOMEN.

I VERILY believe some of my New York friends experienced a sensation of difficulty in crediting my explanation of the Washington affair, for, to my chagrin, they came to urge me to sign a total abstinence pledge, and to join a temperance society.

Having nothing else to do, I signed and joined. I would have it distinctly understood, however, that I had no more need of such props than a carriage has of a fifth wheel. I disliked very much to bind with galling fetters the glorious American eagle in my bosom. But if any man can resist the tearful entreaties of one hundred and seventeen women, each one bearing a vote, instead of a child in her coming hands, he can do more than I.

They convinced me that I was perfectly safe and sound in in all my habits *as an individual*, but that I was as much more than an individual as sunlight is more than sun. Pretty comparison, is it not? A person is like the sun's body, which, as such, is comparatively useless, while a person's influence is like the great universal effulgence that shines on the just and on the unjust.

One lady said, quoting from Longfellow:

"I feel like Master Joslyn, when he found the hornet's

nest, and thought it some strange fruit until the seeds came out, and then he dropped it."

When I asked her what made her feel that way, she replied, that she merely wanted to illustrate the position of the man who finds the wine cup, and thinks it some strange fruit, until the seeds come out, and then—he does not drop it. "And this," she continued, "makes the vice of intemperance a *society* interest. If the hornets confined their deathly stings to the foolish person carrying the nest, other people might conclude, with some show of reason, that they would attend to their own business and let him attend to his. But when the hornets are stinging everybody at random, it becomes everybody's business to destroy the nest, in spite of the objections of him who happens to have it in his possession."

I thought I saw some force in these remarks, although they could not justly be called argument, coming, as they did, from a woman."

"But you forget," said I, wishing to furnish a sample of genuine masculine logic, "that there is such a thing as personal liberty, for which our fathers and mothers fought, bled, and died, and with which no municipal, state, or national law must be allowed to interfere."

"That is all very well," answered the chairwoman of the New York Christian Union Temperance Universal Suffrage Equal Rights Just Compensation Social Reformation Praying and Working Band, "but if a railroad company were to adopt the plan of running open passenger cars on its track, it would avail nothing for it to plead that the cars were its own, and that if the people did not like them they could withhold their patronage; for the law would step in and compel the company to avoid even the *occasion* of danger.

That is what we ask of legislation in this case. Intemperance is running open cars over a rough road day and night. Ten thousand passengers fall off every year, and are either horribly maimed for life or killed outright. Not only the criminally careless thus fall, but they drag with them an untold number of innocent women and children."

"True," I replied, "but I am under the unpleasant necessity of showing you how far short your intuitive conception falls of an all-comprehensive rationalistic view of the real situation. This is a great world. And, although many are ruined by intemperance, they constitute but an insignificant minority compared with the millions who daily indulge in intoxicating beverages but are never injured thereby."

Any person but a woman would have been so staggered by this stubborn fact as not to attempt an immediate reply; but the presiding officer of the New York Christian U. T. U., etc., etc., etc., had me answered before the last word was fairly out of my mouth. Then, just to give me something to think of, she told me how a company of loafers were once gathered together in the bar-room of a tavern, when a question arose as to who could hold his leg in a tub of hot water the longest.

"At last," continued the chairwoman, "a quiet appearing stranger emerged from a dark corner, and requested to have the tub filled with boiling water, and then laid a wager that he would hold his leg in it for five minutes. The water was provided, when immediately, without wincing, the stranger coolly dipped his leg into it, and held it there the full time, showing no indication of suffering."

"Do you expect me to believe that?" I inquired, as the chairwoman paused in her narration. "A *man* never believes the unreasonable. No person's lower limb could be im-

mersed for an instant in water at boiling temperature without causing the most excrutiating pain."

"You mistake," said she. "For it was afterward discovered that the man had a *wooden leg*."

"A very good story," I replied, laughing. "But I cannot see what it has to do with the immunity from evil which is enjoyed by those who drink moderately of strong drink."

"Why, can you not see the point?" exclaimed my fair visitor. "When you hear a person boast that he has drank all his life, and that it has never hurt him, set it down that the head—which should have been the affected part—is essentially wooden."

"Your judgment is too harsh and sweeping," I respectfully suggested. "There have been some great and good men in the world's history who began with moderate drinking, and never went beyond it."

"True, sir; but they had to fight continually against a natural law or tendency, thus exhausting much energy that might have been more usefully expended."

"I do not quite catch your meaning."

"I mean this: The natural habit or tendency of alcohol is to make provision for its own future. Once introduced into the brain, it refits the brain for its convenience with the expectation of coming again. Every time it enters, it makes more elaborate preparations for subsequent visits. If cheese possessed this inherent demand for a constant increase of allowance, I should organize a society to work for the abolition of cheese. Do you understand me now?"

I understood more than I was willing to confess, but neglected to tell her so.

"Strong drink," she continued, "enters the delicate tissue of the brain, and, by absorbing the fluids, hardens the

albumen, and thus makes the victim utterly incapable of comprehending his own danger. Let me illustrate:

"Two men were crossing a slough, when one of them fell into a treacherous mud-hole, from which the other was unable to extricate him."

"How far was he in?" I inquired, thinking to entangle my disputant in the meshes of an improbability.

"Up to his knees," she replied.

"His companion must have been rather puny," I said, laughing, "if he could not get even the lower part of one's lower limbs out of the mire."

"I said he was in up to his knees," responded the woman with considerable emphasis. "But he was in *head first.* That is just the way the moderate drinker goes in. Therefore he needs must have much warning to withhold him from the dangerous pitfall, and abundant assistance when first he falls."

Realizing that I was not occupying the most advantageous ground for the complete suppression of the New York Christian U. T. U., etc., etc., etc., Praying and Working Band, I hastened to a new position, and said:

"You must admit that the Bible—"

But I had no time to finish, for the chairwoman had seen already what I was coming at, and was there herself long enough before me to furnish a volume of answer which would have caused a short-hand reporter to commit suicide."

"The ingenious devices of sin can prove anything by the Bible," she went on to say. "Once our minister had to be absent over Sunday, and not being able to obtain a supply from the clerical ranks, he asked a physician to occupy the pulpit. He consented, but found it very difficult to select a text to suit him. At last he came across these words, hav-

ing reference to the divine Master, '*And he healed them all, and charged them*,' from which he proceeded to argue that doctors were justified in compelling their patients to pay fees. Some of the congregation were so ignorant they did not know that the whole clause reads, 'And he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known.'

"Thus, on the temperance question, we demand that the Bible shall be fairly read and interpreted, not with reference to a single sentence, but taking into consideration its whole spirit and purpose."

As I could not trust myself to quote even single sentences, to say nothing of discussing the whole soul and tenor of the good book, I wisely forebore to carry the discussion any further in that particular direction.

"I do not advocate the habitual use of stimulants," said I, "but as a medicine—"

"Medicine" was the last word I uttered for five minutes, during which I received more information embodying the opinions of eminent physicians than I had supposed existed in all the libraries of the world.

"It is just like this," said the head official, after pronouncing a scorching anathema on the memory of Paracelsus, "you find, that in a certain place your roof is leaking, and you send a man up to repair it. Being a shiftless workman, he does nothing but take some shingles out of the sound parts of the roof, with which to stop the leak in the unsound parts. All is well until the next storm, when you discover that, although the water does not come through in the old place, there are several new places that need attention. Again you send for the workman, and again he mends the roof with the roof itself; and this continues, until finally

the whole roof is destroyed. Such a fraudulent workman is alcohol, and such a roof is the human system. Draw your own conclusion."

The conclusion I drew was that I was not making much headway against the assailant of my principles.

Gathering all my energies for a final onslaught, I said:

"Do not suppose for a moment that I am not the most rigid advocate of temperance. But, looking at the subject coolly, deliberately, and from every side, as only a man is capable of doing, I must hold to the position that license is the most practical remedy for the monstrous evil with which we are trying to deal."

"And what will be the end? What is the final upshot of the license system?" asked the president aforesaid, in dulcet tones, as though she were really asking for information.

"The license policy," said I, "proposes to hold the evil under restraint, until, without any great revolution or unnatural excitement, it dies a natural death."

"That reminds me of the Irishman whose sleep was disturbed by a howling dog," replied my fair tormentor. "He endured the infliction as long as possible, and then jumped out of bed and out at the window into the wintry air. He had been gone a long time when his good wife began to worry, fearing something had happened to Pat. Going to the window, what was her surprise to behold her lord and master sitting on a snow-bank in almost complete disarray, while holding to the dog by the hind leg.

"'Phat are ye doin' thar, ye spalpeen?' she demanded.

"'Och, now, kape quiet,' answered his masculinity. 'Don't ye see I'm afther holding the baste here oontil he frazes to death?'"

"That is nothing but an almanac story," said I; "and if

I had my hat on, I should certainly remove it out of respect to its venerable age. You certainly cannot expect me to believe it," I added, hoping to confuse her.

She braced herself for a grand effort, and vigorously replied:

"The story is just as reasonable as that any man whose brains are not made of sawdust believes that the license party can hold to the evil of intemperance until it dies a natural death. Since you have been pleased to characterize my anecdote as being in its second childhood, I will give you another. During our last war, an officer of the grand rounds visited the picket posts one night, when he discovered that one of the posts was vacant. He called loudly for the missing soldier. After a while an answer came from the distant woods:

"'Here I am.'

"'What are you doing there?'

"'I've caught a rebel.'

"'Why don't you bring him in?'

"'He won't let me.'

"Just so," continued my handsome aggravator, "the license party has caught King Alcohol. Why don't it bring him in? Because, in reality, the king is in command. Now, sir, I have come here with these down-trodden sisters to argue this question of intemperance in all its length, breadth, and thickness. We desire to labor with you until you sign our pledge, and promise that your influence shall be exerted in our cause."

"Where is the pledge?" said I. "Let me subscribe."

They let me.

Then the angel of peace spread her white and beautiful wings over our home.

PART II.

ACROSS THE BOG.

CHAPTER I.

AN AMBITION GRATIFIED.

AFTER living in luxury several years, during which I had the satisfaction of seeing my children develope into boys and girls of excellent promise—for our oldest was now seventeen, and Pete, who was kidnapped, and for whom we had always kept a large place in our hearts, would be at least two years older than the twin—I began to weary of easy circumstances, and to yearn for a more active life.

Augusta, too, when she considered how many awkward embarrassments my leisure got me into, seemed willing that I should engage in some kind of active business, even though it resulted in depriving her of the sweet consolation of my constant presence. What a self-sacrificing spirit that woman has always had!

What should I do?

"Anything to occupy the mind," suggested Augusta.

I realized then that it was not well to have so much mind lying around loose.

About that time I accidentally heard of an opening for a good detective. I had always thought favorably of that profession, and believed that naturally I was well fitted for it.

A school-master who had gone from New York, and with whom I had been on terms of warmest friendship, had been

murdered in Swampton, Massachusetts, under such peculiar circumstances that the perpetrator of the crime had so far remained undiscovered and unknown, notwithstanding a reward had been offered for his arrest and conviction. But, although many persons had been engaged in hunting a clue, no approach to success had yet been made.

I was urged by some of my friends, who also were friends of the unfortunate man, to undertake ferreting out the mystery. Little urging was required, for I was glad of an opportunity to show my loyalty of love toward the dead. Besides, I craved just the kind of excitement which such a mission would afford.

My first move was to go to Swampton, and learn what I could concerning the family of John Hotchkick, in whose house the school-master had been boarding at the time of his violent decease.

I had been told that they had not given a very clear description of the "stranger," who, they said, had come to their house at midnight, and committed the awful deed.

In detective work one must not despise small things. They may be straws, but they serve to show the course of the current.

From some of John Hotchkick's neighbors, especially women, I learned many incidents in connection with his past life that ordinarily would be regarded as too insignificant to merit a moment's consideration, but which, to my mind, were more or less valuable in application to the case on which I was at work.

John Hotchkick and his wife lived in a small way on a small farm, in a small town. When we have said John Hotchkick and his wife we have included the whole tribe.

Hotchkick himself was a remnant of a particular family,

of whom heaven and earth had had enough. Like other remnants, he was held at a discount, and it is quite possible that in a wholesale transaction Providence might have thrown him in, thereby saving the trouble of invoicing him.

As for Mrs. Hotchkiek, there is some evidence of design in her creation, for, rixatrix that she was, she seemed to have been made on purpose for Hotchkick.

If it be true that "misery *loves* company," there was more solid love in that match than could be found in a whole Mormon city. Cupid's benevolence is quite apparent, for, had the man married some other woman, and had the woman married some other man, there would have been four persons wretched, instead of two.

They were physically incapacitated for any such ceremony as kissing.

John's lips were so thin he could not even whistle to a dog. For the same reason, Mrs. John could not sip her tea, but was obliged to swallow it whole. So when we think of the dog and think of the tea, we are forced to acknowledge it was a fortunate circumstance that the Hotchkick tribe did not increase. An unkissed child would either die or live to curse his existence.

Seventeen years before my visit to the family, on a certain November morning, this narrow-gauged couple locked up their house, and went to Boston to do a little shopping, and this is what occurred to them on their way home late at night:

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Hotchkick. "Our house is all afire! Hurry! We shall lose everything!"

The man muttered some uncouth reply, and began immediately to administer a quick succession of blows to his horse with the remnant of a birch rod; but the brute, not

being easily excited, utterly failed to realize for some minutes that any extra effort was required. Whipping, with him, had become monotonous. If he ever thought on the subject, it was to the effect that the laying on of a switch is a sort of ceremony as completely inexplicable as many another which is practiced by the human race. That particular portion of his hide which received the blows was so accustomed to them that it had become about as nerveless as his master's conscience.

"Hit him in a new spot," cried Mrs. Hotchkick. "Quick! hurry!"

In the excitement of the moment, the man who wielded the rod followed the counsel of his wife, and adopted an expedient which took effect. Leaning half his length out of the wagon, he struck the horse a cutting blow beneath the flank. He would have struck another, but there was no time. The horse was evidently hurt in his feelings. He was touched to the quick, and quick work he did.

John Hotchkick escaped uninjured, for the horse, who had little foresight and no hindsight, and consequently shot without taking aim, struck completely under the man; which was very unfortunate, for the equine brute, as, by missing Hotchkick, hurt himself by coming in contact with something far less soft. By this time, he seemed to think somebody had struck him on his two hoofs, and he determined to clear the ground of all opposition. Having demolished the dashboard, he operated on a jug of molasses; then with his horse-hand he took out from a bandbox Mrs. Hotchkick's new winter bonnet. So much accomplished, he prospected around in the dark, till he felt a tin can, which he proceeded to open with his iron shoe. This time he must have succeeded beyond his fondest anticipations, for he "struck ile," as poor

Mrs. Hotchkick very soon realized, being as completely soaked with it as though she had been a lampwick.

"Git up! Git up!" yelled Hotchkick, and all the while the beast was "gitting up" just as high as he possibly could. After a while he changed ends, and stood on his hind feet looking at the stars, as though he would calculate the points of compass. Then he made a lurch to one side, and dumped the carriage into a ditch, reserving the two forward wheels for himself, and took them away with him as he withdrew from the scene.

Hotchkick arose as quickly as he could, and began to hallo, "Whoa! whoa!" but the horse must have understood him to say, "Go! go!" for he went.

Mrs. Hotchkick crawled out from the *debris*, declared she was dead, and began to look after the "things," some of which were in the wagon wreck, and others in different directions several yards away.

"Come! come!" cried Hotchkick, "let's see what's the matter with the house. Every winder's ablaze, and we've lost everything."

The twain started on a trot, forgetting their bruises, but were soon out of breath, in spite of their excitement.

"I can't run another step," said Hotchkick, "and I don't think the house is afire, any way. Don't you see it's jest a stiddy light, as though every lamp an' candle we've got was a burnin'?"

"What can it be?" exclaimed the panting and fainting woman. "Had n't I better go back and take care of the things whileyou go on? I'm that sore I can't hardly stan'."

"No," said Hotchkick, "you come with me. I may need your help. P'raps it's robbers."

"O John, I can't, I can't! I jest b'lieve ev'ry bone in my body is broke. Don't let 's go nigh 'em."

"Come on, I say," was the man's gruff reply; and they went on quarreling.

Reaching the house, they found it extravagantly illuminated with blazing lamps and candles.

"Our own candles!" exclaimed Mrs. Hotchkick.

"And our own lamps!" added her husband, with an oath.

They continued cautiously to explore the house, but found nothing startling until the bedroom was reached.

"I'll be blasted," cried Hotchkick, scarcely above a whisper, "if here haint a roarin' fire right here in this ere fireplace, where there never was one afore."

"And what 's this ere thing on the bed?" gasped Mrs. Hotchkick. "Oh! oh! oh! It moves. I seen it move."

"Hush up, you goose."

"O John, don't touch it, or mebbe it 'll go off."

But by this time, John had pulled a little blanket from the strange object, and there, in all its sweetness and innocence, was revealed a sleeping child.

"Somebody's pesky young one," croaked the man.

"Sure 'nough, John. And this ere fire was made to keep it warm. It 's what they call a waif."

"Hum! a pretty mess we 're in, with this imp to take care on. An' we shall find something missin' yet; for whoever left that thing here want one of the sort to go away empty-handed. Turn down the lamps, and blow out the candles. There 's no use squanderin' what little we 've got left."

This loud talk had the effect to awake the babe, who now began to exercise a very vigorous pair of lungs. It was left to cry, however, while Mr. and Mrs. Hotchkick continued to

search the house until they were fully satisfied that nothing had been taken away.

Mrs. Hotchkick's bravery began to revive. "Come, John," she said, "there aint no time to waste. We must see whar the hoss is, then go back after the wagon and the things. There is the vinegar an' the sugar, an' your hat an' my bonnet, an' the calico, an' the molasses, an' the rum, an' the nutmegs all scattered about, an' they must be brought home this very night, even if we don't sleep a wink. Besides, we've got to decide what's to be done with this nuisance of a young one. It must be got away as soon as possible, for it might up an' die, an' then we'd have to pay for its funeral."

"It's a healthy looking boy," suggested Hotchkick.

"Healthy, of course," replied the woman. "Anybody can tell that, by the way he screams. But look at here. What's this, tied up in a handkerchief, an' as heavy as lead? Bless my stars, if it aint money! Gold pieces, an' ten of them, as sure 's I live!"

Hotchkick took each shining eagle in his hand, scrutinized it carefully, smelt it, tasted it, and then rung it on the table until he was fully satisfied that all the coins were genuine. Then he carefully hid them away in an old bureau drawer, which he locked with a key, and then hid the key in another drawer.

"Whatever becomes of the brat," said he, "this ere money belongs to me; for it was all his fault that we had the accident with the hoss, and smashed our best wagon all to pieces."

"Of course," replied the wife, "the money is ours; an' we wont say nothin' to nobody 'bout it. What suppose—but here's somethin' pinned to its sleeve with writin' on it."

Although the note was excellently written, it took Hotchkick and his wife a long time, and required the most vigorous cudgeling of their brains to spell it out. Finally, however, they succeeded in reading, as follows:

"DEAR FRIENDS: With all the anxious solicitation and heart-rending prayer of an unfortunate mother, this precious child is left in your possession, to have and to govern as your wisdom shall dictate.

"As a mother, I part with him reluctantly, and regret that his illegitimate birth must forever be a burden and disgrace for which he is in no wise responsible. His false-hearted father has lately died of drunkenness.

"I leave with you all the money I have in the world, the sum of one hundred dollars, which you will expend in caring for the child as he shall need.

"By the time he is old enough to know anything he will be as motherless as he is now fatherless; for I go my way to the sinful city to to spend a few brief months, and there to die,

"A SORROWFUL WOMAN.

"P. S.—The boy is named after his father, Pelegon Jinny, and he was two years old the twentieth of last August. As he has inherited a naturally vigorous constitution, and will of course never aspire to be anything more than a common laborer, he will, undoubtedly, grow to be of great service to you."

"Aha!" exclaimed Hotchkick, laying down the paper. "I guess we can't do better 'n to keep him; for, you see, in a few years he will make us a first-rate chore boy, an' by the time he 's twelve or fourteen he can do a man's work on the farm. We must remember we are goin' to git old, an' the time may come when he can carry on our place, an' be a sort o' son to us. I don't b'lieve we shall have any trouble with him, 'cause if he should ever git to be stuck up, we 've only jest to remind him of his birth, an' that will alwus keep him down where he b'longs. Hush him up, wife. Don't you see he is screaming his strength all away? He

could drive the cows to pastur' now if his shanks were half as strong as his yelps."

Thus it was decided that the ill-fated waif should become one of the family.

At midnight the broken wagon and the "things" had all been brought home, Mrs. Hotchkick had taken an inventory of them a dozen times, the baby had received a drink of fresh milk from the "newest" cow, and, as a climax to the day's excitement, there was a great racket in the barn, in which one might have distinguished the sounds of heavy blows, prancing hoofs, and profane cursing. It was John Hotchkick most unmercifully beating poor old Bill with the remnant of a hoe-handle.

In another hour, Hotchkick and his wife slept.

The weary horse, with aching limbs and quivering flesh, did not lie down at all, but stood and suffered, and thought, perhaps—of what?

The babe moaned on its pillow, while the rain began pattering on the roof, as though Heaven wept; and the wind was freighted only with suggestions of deep sadness, as it came in fitful gusts against the windows of the room where the child half slept, half feared, and half wished, perhaps, it had never been born.

Meanwhile, in another house, not far away, a clergyman was vainly courting "tired Nature's sweet restorer." Had his thoughts found utterance, his invalid wife would have been surprised to hear him say, "I hope they will keep the child. It was my advice that gave them the money, and after this they must pay more pew rent."

CHAPTER II.

I DO SOME GOOD.

SO Pelegon Jinny was nearly out of his teens at the time I visited John Hotchkick and wife, asking them if they would take me to board for a while.

As they were greedy for the money I offered, I had no difficulty in effecting the arrangement.

I soon discovered that I had not been misinformed as to the character of my host and hostess. They were possessed of all that meanness of nature which is the natural result of having inherited from several generations the habitual practice of rigid economy. However much moral or political reformers may deplore extravagance, the fact remains, that constantly studied economy is a virtue only when a necessity, while the necessity itself, if long continued, is an unmitigated curse.

During the winter in my strange boarding-place, Pelegon was my most congenial companion, for I found him endowed with excellent qualities of mind and heart. There was about him, however, a painful lack of development, which was quite to be expected, considering the tyrannical bringing up to which he had been subjected during the most of his years. First from sympathy and pity, then from a high sense of appreciation, I grew to love him almost as I would if he had been my own boy.

An incident will best illustrate the respective characters of all the parties concerned.

Spring had come—so the almanac said—and the ice in Concord river had just started seaward, when, one day, Hotchkick and Pelegon went to the banks of the river to gather fire-wood.

A large tree had succumbed to a recent storm, and now lay sprawling in the water. Hotchkick looked longingly upon it, and at last resolved to walk out as far as he could among the branches, and cut them off. For a time he was quite successful in his undertaking, and had secured at least half a cord of wood, when his foot slipped, and he fell off into deep water. As he had never possessed sufficient enterprise to acquire the art of swimming, he found himself contending against an element with whose friendly acquaintance he had never honored himself.

Instinctively, he caught at a limb of the tree; but as it was one he had just cut off, the next instant both he and the limb were wildly afloat. Then he let go of the branch and tried to strike bottom with his feet, thinking he could hold his breath and walk to the shore under water. Unluckily, this was a feat which his feet refused to perform, and he immediately changed about and threw his toes into the air, as though they could do his breathing.

Not being able to walk on his head, he resorted to another experiment. Squirming around, he threw up his hands and tried to take hold of something above him; but as the nearest object in that direction was the sky, he was not likely to reach it until after giving his last kick.

Just at this instant Pelegon, who had heard the splash while engaged in felling a tree some distance away, left his work, threw off his coat and boots, and plunged into the icy

water. A moment after, he seized the drowning man by the hair, and drew him ashore.

It was some time before Hotchkick, half dead with fright and cold, was able to speak; but no sooner had he recovered his voice than he began to curse the boy for not having pulled him out with less delay, and especially for stopping to take off his coat and boots before jumping into the water.

Pelegon tried to explain that, as he was only a poor swimmer, he could not have made headway with so many clothes on; but the enraged man would not listen to reason, and, at this moment happening to discover that he was bare-headed, his wrath broke out afresh.

"Where is my hat?" he demanded of Pelegon. "You stupid! there it is, way out in the water, floating down the river. Jump in an' git it! Jump in, I say, this instant!"

Pelegon, having always been ruled in this tyrannical manner, had no disposition to disobey. So, without waiting either to plead or object, he plunged into the water, and struck out bravely toward the hat, which, by this time, had been carried by the wind a considerable distance from the shore. His limbs soon began to grow numb, so cold was the water, while the garments he had on retarded his movements and weighed him heavily down. However, he secured the hat, and was on his way shoreward, almost overpowered with chill and fatigue, when his legs were suddenly seized with cramp, and he could make no further progress. For a moment he struggled with his arms, and then sank below the surface. His lungs craved air, but, in the effort to obtain it, they received nothing but water; and, in trying to cough this out, he again attempted to inhale, and thus his body became filled with the cold and heavy fluid. In a short space of time, he passed through all the agonies of

death into that condition of perfect calm just preceding the complete separation of body and soul.

Hotchkick, little affected save by his own discomfort, turned toward home, grumbling as he went:

"Well, that 's the last of him, an' my hat 's gone, an' he haint never paid for his bringin' up."

"What's the trouble?" I demanded, just issuing from a clump of elders which fringed a portion of the bank, for I had fortuitously selected that neighborhood for a ramble.

"I am nearly dead," muttered Hotchkick, "an' Pelegon 's drowned."

"When?"

"Only a moment ago."

"Where?" I demanded.

Hotchkick pointed in the direction in which the boy had been last seen.

I was almost overwhelmed with agony. Having never learned to swim, it was useless for me to think of trying it now. I looked anxiously in every direction. Not a soul was in sight. Only two houses. One was Hotchkick's. No help there. The other belonged to an Irish widow with two children. No help there. I wrung my hands and shouted. My voice came back all dead and lay itself down with my dying hope. Then I started and ran along the river-side, determined to continue till somebody could be found. Beholding a little skiff high and dry on the bank, my hope revived. I seized the boat, and began dragging it toward the water. It went the length of an iron chain and then stopped, being locked to a tree. Besides, the oars had been taken away. Hope died. There was an open tin can in the boat, and in this was a strong line and a large fish-hook, used for catching pickerel.

"A pole!" cried I. In another instant I had found one, and began tying the line to it, while I almost flew along the shore, till I reached the place opposite where Pelegon had gone down. Then I waded into the river waist deep, and throwing the line, with hook and weight attached, could scarcely give it time to sink before drawing it rapidly toward me, only to be disappointed. A little further down stream I threw the line again. No success.

Still further downward. In vain.

Yet further down the current. The hook caught something. I pulled with all possible steadiness and swiftness.

My purpose was accomplished. The hook, being well secured in the boy's clothing, I was enabled to draw him from the water.

If appearances were trustworthy, Pelegon was dead. Hotchkick declared that "it aint nothin' but folly to try to save him." I feared the worst, but was determined to leave nothing untried, for I was not ignorant of what should be done in such cases. After taking off my coat and throwing it over the cold form of my cherished young friend, I seized the body and hurriedly carried it, face downward, with the head gently raised, to a hovel close by.

The woman who lived there was so frightened that all her wits went wool-gathering, and for the first minute she could do nothing but hold up her hands in horror and try to keep from fainting. Meanwhile Hotchkick dispatched her two children to tell Mrs. Hotchkick to come over right away and help take care of—*himself*, for he was wet and cold.

I suffered not a second to be wasted, but immediately stripped the body of my unconscious charge, and wrapped it in several sheets, which I kept constantly saturated with hot water. Not until the blood was thus heated did I endeavor

by friction to reëstablish circulation. At the proper moment, I began vigorously rubbing toward the heart, in order that it might be supplied with venous blood. Meanwhile, I rolled the body gently from face to side, to and fro, hoping thereby to set the respiratory organs in motion.

Still no sign of life. Still I persisted. Now it was bottles of hot water applied to the extremities, arm-pits, and spine, and now a gentle lifting forward of the body, with the face still downward. Everything appeared hopeless, when Mrs. Hotchkick suddenly rushed into the room. "Give him to me!" she exclaimed boisterously. "If anybody can bring him to, I can. I know all about it. Stand back, here! Stand back!"

This seemed to give the other woman courage, and she, too, cried out, "Stand back!" And then, happening to think of something she had once heard her Dublin grandmother say about salt, she continued, "Och, Missus Hotchkeeck, what ye want is coorse salt. Rub the body wid it as hard as iver ye con. Here, take the salt, quick!"

"No, I won't have the salt," replied Mrs. Hotchkick, in piercing tones. "He must be rolled on a bar'l. A pretty set you all be, that you haint got a bar'l afore this. Hurry, now, and bring a bar'l right away."

The two small children were instantly sent to the barn to fetch the barrel. When it came, Mrs. Hotchkick placed it in the middle of the floor, then went to the feet of the prostrate form, and ordered me to take hold of the head.

"Stand away!" I exclaimed. "I have charge of this case myself, and you must obey my orders. Bring the hand-bellows. Hurry!"

"Did he say salt?" asked the mistress of the house.

The bellows were soon brought, when I put the pipe into

one of the patient's nostrils, carefully closing the other and the mouth, and then blew the bellows lightly in order to inflate the lungs. As soon as the breast was raised a little, I set the nostrils and mouth free, and pressed gently on the chest. This process was several times repeated, during which one woman talked incessantly of the virtue of "coorse salt, by the howly saints," while the other told of a "drownded man I once hearn tell on that was saved by rollin' on a bar'l."

All the while, John Hotchkick stood by and did nothing but grumble about the "tarnation tom-foolery of tryin' to bring a boy to life what's already dead 's a door-nail, while I can't have even a dry shirt."

Finally the chest of Pelegon slightly heaved of its own accord; his lips moved, and his eyes partially opened.

Everybody was surprised. But I still continued to work over the prostrate form.

"I should think somebody might do somethin' fur *me!*" exclaimed John Hotchkick. "Haint I ben in the water as well 's that boy? And haint I caught my death's cold? Pelegon," he continued, turning abruptly toward the patient, who, at this instant, was enduring that terrible torture which only those who have been thus rescued from the greedy grasp of death can realize. "Pelegon, I say, if you 'd had sense enough to 've got my hat when you got me, you 'd saved us this fuss."

This remark was a hot coal which set on fire my whole nature. For the first time in my life, I was absolutely and irrepressibly filled with wrath. It is not a pleasant thing to record, but the painful truth must be told. Then and there I lost control of my will, and gave myself up to a passion of which no one would have supposed me capable.

"Hotchkick," cried I, "you are the meanest man in the world!"

"I'll knock that insult down your throat," retorted Hotchkick, emphasizing the threat with a horrid oath, and at the same time raising his fist to strike me.

My indignation could not wait. I gave John Hotchkick a stinging blow on the right ear, and another on the left. I knocked him square in the face, hit him between the eyes, on the nose, and under the chin.

The more thumps I administered, the more spiteful I became; and all the black and blue spots which covered his body were beginning to merge into one spot, although even that could not well be seen, so fast did he spin around and pirouette about, at one moment ricocheting on the sharp angle of a table, and at the next bringing up against the hot stove. There was, indeed, real danger of my killing the man outright; but, happily, the fates ordered otherwise.

Pelegon watched the tragic performance with considerable interest, and finally looked at me pleadingly, and, in a slow, weak voice, said:

"Don't, don't! He won't catch cold now."

It was an exciting time. Both of the women were screaming at the top of their voices, the one having forgotten "coorse salt, by the howly saints," and the other that there "haint nothin' like rollin' on a bar'l."

At last, the whipped man began to beg for mercy like a child.

I cannot justify myself in this exercise of corporal punishment. Still,

> "Diseases desperate grown,
> By desperate appliances are relieved,
> Or not at all."

All things have an end. So did the scourging of Hotchkick.

Shortly after, I had Pelegon removed to Mr. Wordswell's, where I engaged a pleasant suite of rooms for both of us.

Mr. Wordswell and his wife were the wealthiest, most cultured, as well as the most lovable persons with whom I was acquainted in that neighborhood.

Their only child, Ozelia, a beautiful girl of eighteen summers, was now at home on a few weeks' vacation, she being a member of a young ladies' boarding-school near Boston.

She and Pelegon had grown to be fast friends. They had been together in all their studies while both attended the Swampton school, and had come to experience a delight in each other's company which neither could find elsewhere. And now she faithfully administered to the poor boy during his sickness!

As for myself, I found the change of boarding-place very agreeable. I had no occasion to remain longer at the Hotchkicks', having learned all that I could from them in reference to the school-master.

One thing I had noticed from the first: their reticence when that painful subject was broached. As they were not possessed of any tender sentiment, I was left to form the most reasonable conclusion I could as to the true cause of their refusing to be drawn into conversation in relation to the crime.

Two other facts had considerable weight in my mind: first, the victim to the terrible deed had never had any enemies, so far as could be ascertained; second, he had no money or other valuables, that could furnish temptation to a felon.

CHAPTER III.

A SCHEME.

AS soon as Pelegon was able to sit up, John Hotchkick came to take him home. The old fox must have watched his opportunity, for he came just after I had left the house with Mr. and Mrs. Wordswell. The servant was also out; so the only inmates were Ozelia and her patient.

Had I mistrusted that such a danger was probable, I would as soon have thought of sacrificing a right arm as of leaving my two young friends to the mercy of the violent-tempered reprobate.

Auspiciously, they saw him approaching, and were in time to fasten the door.

Without stopping to knock, he attempted to enter. Baffled at the front, he hastened around the house, hoping to be successful there. Ozelia, however, was too quick for him, and again his way was barred. But being endowed with brutal persistency, knowing he had no immediate foe to fear, with feline slyness he crawled down an outer stairway into the cellar. Thence he had no difficulty in finding his way through the kitchen into that part of the house occupied by the frightened girl and convalescent boy.

"Git on your hat, an' come along with me, this instant!" he demanded of Pelegon, in cruel tones.

"Oh, he cannot!" pleaded Ozelia. "Please do not take

him. He is scarcely able to stand, and has not eaten anything since the accident except the lightest nourishment."

"What you got to say 'bout him?" ejaculated the uncouth farmer. "He's my boy—leastways, ontil he's paid fur his bringin' up. Git out o' my way!"

"I shall not get out of your way," answered Ozelia, her whole spirit roused. "You will not take Pelegon from this house without taking me also."

"Look er here, gal, you'll git hurt, if you interfere with me. I'm after my rights, an' I'll have them, no matter what happens."

Saying which, he seized Pelegon by the arm, and began dragging him toward the door.

In an instant, Ozelia was endowed with all the heroism of fully developed womanhood.

To hold Pelegon with one hand and keep off the infuriated girl with the other gave Hotchkick all he could attend to. A lively scuffle ensued. Brute force, however, was too much, even for the best that could be done by the young people, and, inch by inch, they were drawn toward the cellar stairs; for Hotchkick wisely concluded that he had better go out the way he came in, thus avoiding bolted doors.

On the stairway occurred the chief tug of conflict, and a very dangerous place it was, for a fall to the cellar-bottom might have crippled a person for life. Undoubtedly, it was Ozelia's intention to hold Pelegon back and push Hotchkick forward. So nearly was she successful in this that the farmer was just on the point of falling backward, when he loosened his hold on the boy, and reached up to take hold of something.

Now it happened that overhead was a wire that Mr.

JOHN HOTCHKICK TIED FAST TO A POST.

Wordswell used in experimenting with electric lights, and it was carrying a strong current. No sooner had John Hotchkick taken hold of it than it took hold of him. Almost literally, he was struck by lightning; but, not knowing what was the matter, he grasped the wire with increased firmness, until his hand was so completely paralyzed that he was powerless to remove it. This frightened him to the extent of utterly unstringing his nerves, and leaving him as weak as an infant.

Ozelia soon observed the peril he was in; but not until she had bound his feet together with a rope, and tied his dangling arm to his side, did she sever the electric wire with a hatchet, and let the poor man slide down stairs, at the imminent risk of ruining his clothes.

She and Pelegon then bound his other arm, and tied him to a post, so that, in case the paralysis should leave him, he would still be harmless.

When Mr. and Mrs. Wordswell and I returned from our neighboring visit, and saw the condition which the house was in, we were astonished. All the way from the sick chamber to the cellar-door in the kitchen there were pieces of broken furniture, extracted door-knobs, torn carpets, and confusion worse confounded.

Mrs. Wordswell turned white, threw up her hands, then sat down on a three-legged chair—a part of the common ruin—and tumbled to the floor.

Mr. Wordswell remarked, when he had succeeded in properly adjusting his wife:

"Well, well! This house must have been struck by a cyclone!"

"There has been a mad bull in here," I ventured to suggest."

"Yes," said Ozelia; "and if you will come down cellar, you shall see where we have tied him."

I followed at her heels, and Mr. Wordswell followed at mine, while his wife and Pelegon brought up the rear.

I had reason to believe I had already met with some surprises in my life, but when I saw John Hotchkick, bound hand and foot and tied to a post, all other surprises were eclipsed.

"Somebody will suffer for this afore I'm through with 'em!" he groaned.

"You will not be very dangerous," remarked Ozelia, "so long as a sick boy and a mere school-girl can throw you down cellar, and tie you up in a bundle."

"Did you do this?" demanded Mr. Wordswell, looking first at Pelegon, then at his daughter.

"Every bit of it," answered Ozelia. "He came up through the cellar by stealth, and undertook to carry off my patient by bluster and force. By taking a good look at him, you can see just how far he has got toward accomplishing his purpose."

How I envied that noble girl! Her father drew her to his breast, and fervently kissed her. I envied him, too.

After we had compelled Hotchkick to take an oath to keep the peace, and never again to molest Pelegon, we allowed him to betake himself to his own habitation, where he could give such account of himself to his better, or worse, half, as his unscrupulous conscience would allow.

It was not long before Mr. Wordswell and his wife began to observe that the two children, as they called their daughter and Pelegon, were exhibiting much more than ordinary fondness for each other.

"We must not allow them to be together so much," said

Mr. Wordswell, "and I shall take it upon myself to see that Ozelia is cautioned."

This parental interference had the natural effect of developing in the two young persons that quality of love which most thrives when most opposed, until it becomes more unconquerable than any other trait in human nature. The dormant virtue of souls is never fully aroused until Shall and Shall Not meet face to face, and fight like gods.

I saw into the hearts of my young friends, but I communed only with myself in regard to the subject. Just now I was greatly interested in another matter.

It might have been a month after Pelegon's escape from a watery grave when he and I were conversing together in the library, recalling the thrilling incidents of the rescue.

"I want to tell you," said he, "something that appears very strange. While I was in the river, I had a great many curious thoughts and sensations. In about a minute I remembered everything I had ever seen, heard, or done."

"What was the first event of your life which you brought to mind?" I asked.

"That is the very thing I want to tell you about," answered Pelegon, "for it is a queer circumstance. I remembered just as plainly as could be how I was on a bed, and saw a man put wood on a hearth and build a fire. I remembered how afraid I was, and how I cried out, and he immediately forced something into my mouth, and made me swallow it."

"Did you recall how the man looked?"

"Yes, he came before my mind just as natural as life. He was a short, thick-set man, dark-complexioned, with snarly black hair and whiskers."

"Who do you suppose he could have been?" inquired I.

"I am almost certain he was the man who first brought me to father Hotchkick's."

"The *man*. I have been told it was a woman—your mother."

"Yes; so everybody says, but nobody saw her. I have tried to remember back to that night a thousand times, and occasionally have had just a second's faint recollection of seeing a man stand over me, and of watching him through my tears as he built the fire in the fire-place. Then when I would try to fix the incidents more clearly in my mind they would all melt away."

"Have you never met the man since the time you lay on the bed and saw him build the fire?" I asked.

"No; I am sure I have not."

"Could not somebody have built a fire in your bedroom when you were older, and is n't that what you recollect?"

"No; for since that time I have never been where there was a bed and a fire in the same room."

"Do you think you should know that strange man if you were to see him again?"

"Yes: I am certain of it."

"He must have made a deep impression on your childish mind, and it only needed that unfolding of the mental record which generally precedes the flight of a soul, to bring his features again before you. Perhaps something of great importance will grow out of this. In fact, your experience in nearly drowning may be one of the mysterious ways in which Providence is moving for the accomplishment of a purpose. By the by," I continued, "I have often wished I could see that note which, as I have been told, was pinned to your dress when you were left at Hotchkick's. Is it still in existence?"

"Yes, sir," replied Pelegon. "And I could go in the night and get it for you, for I know just what window to crawl into, and just the drawer where it is kept. If only you will come along, so that if the Hotchkicks should happen to get after me."

"Very well," I answered.

CHAPTER IV.

MICE IN THE PLOT.

IT was a cloudy, moonless night when Pelegon carefully raised a back window, through which he passed into the kitchen of the Hotchkick house, while I waited outside.

Slowly and stealthily the boy felt his way, till he came to the sitting-room, off which opened the bedroom usually occupied by the farmer and his wife.

Now, although the bedroom door was wide open, Pelegon remained quiet some moments before he could detect the faintest sound. Then somebody turned over in bed; then Mother Hotchkick was seized with a cough, after which she muttered something the boy could not understand; and next there was a jarring of the floor, and somebody was out of bed striking a match to light the candle.

Pelegon, all a tremble, stooped down and crawled under a table, which, fortunately, was covered with a cloth large enough to entirely conceal him. He was none too quick, for scarcely had he thus secreted himself when Mrs. Hotchkick came out into the sitting-room, bringing the candle in her hand. Setting it on the table, she glanced at the old eight-day clock, which stood in the corner of the room, and remarked, almost in a whisper, "Nearly 'leven, an' he aint here yet." Then she went to the window, raised the sash, and looked out.

"Dark's a pocket!" she exclaimed. "P'raps somethin's happened to him. I'm afeared—no, thar's the wheels on the bridge, he'll come in a few minutes, so I'll jest set here an' wait for him."

Thus soliloquizing, she sat down in a chair, placed her elbow on the table, and leaned her head on her hand.

Pelegon felt slightly uncomfortable; but, nevertheless, the idea flashed across his mind what a good joke it would be to yelp like a dog, seize the old woman by her bare feet, then jump and run, leaving her half scared to death. Yet, fascinating as it was, this temptation would have been resisted, had not Mrs. Hotchkick suddenly stretched out her foot, bringing it in contact with Pelegon's knee. He knew that her next move would be to look under the table to see what she had hit; so he resolved to put his plan into execution without delay.

Mrs. Hotchkick had always felt an insane aversion toward dogs, being thrown into a fit of mortal terror whenever one came into her presence. Now, when she heard a savage growl, followed by the violent and painful seizure of her toes—which with many corns were afflicted—she set up such a night-rending screech, that might have alarmed a whole neighborhood.

For my part, I thought bedlam had broken loose, and, while wondering what it all meant, a figure dressed in white came flying around the corner of the house with such astonishing velocity that I had no time to get out of the way before being knocked into a promiscuous heap, while, a little distance off, lay another mass of confusion made up of a ghostly form, which had been seriously telescoped in the collision.

To cut the matter short, here was the prostrate form of

Mrs. Hotchkick, who, either from fright or concussion of the brain, was now quite unconscious.

Although I myself felt the need of being hauled up for repairs, I could not think of leaving this insensible woman without endeavoring to revive her. With Pelegon's assistance, I was just meeting with success when Mr. Hotchkick drove up in front of the house, and began calling on his wife to come out and unhitch the horse, saying that he was sick, which was quite likely, as it was his custom, when away from home during meal time, to go without eating, and to use the money thus saved in paying for grog. Judging from the thickness of his voice on this occasion, he must have deprived himself of both dinner and supper.

Not getting any response to his repeated calls, his hot temper rose, and he applied names to his wife, which, fortunately for her peace of mind, she was not in condition to comprehend. Such was the efficacy of my medical skill, however, that it was not long before my patient became cognizant of her husband's dulcet tones, and succeeded in making herself heard in reply to him.

Pelegon and I hastily glided into a clump of bushes, where we awaited developments.

Ere long, the old farmer staggered around the house; but when he saw how strangely his wife looked and acted, he was nonplussed.

"Whar d'ye git yer liquor?" he demanded, as the poor woman, in trying to stand on her feet, fell over from sheer weakness.

"A great dog tared me all to pieces," gasped Mrs. Hotchkick.

"Wal, I guess thar's 'nuff uv yer left, sich as it is, to onhitch the hoss — come along!" said the unfeeling man.

"Lead me!" pleaded the woman.

"Yes, I'll lead yer," he answered, taking hold of her arm. "Git up, now! You're drunk as a fool; that's what's the matter. Come along! Stop saggin' down so!"

Neither of them could walk straight, and it was difficult to decide which stood most in need of assistance.

They grazed against every tree, and fell over every stone, until finally John got himself somewhat cooled off by accidentally taking a seat in a tub full of rain-water.

By this time Mrs. Hotchkick had so far regained her strength as to be able to render the necessary aid in releasing her lord and master from his sorry predicament.

Coming to the place where the horse had been left, he was not to be found. Having gone unfed since morning, the natural instinct of hunger made the beast impatient to be taken from the wagon, and prompted him, at last, to go in search of his owner, or, more likely, his stable. Owing, however, to one of the lines being fastened tighter than the other, which drew on the bit, the animal, having started, was guided into a near-by open field, in which was a deep well covered with decaying boards. Upon these the horse stepped; but his weight caused them to give way the instant his fore feet came upon the weakened covering. There was a deafening crash, as the wagon went to pieces in trying to follow the horse, succeeded by a subdued splash — then all was quiet as the grave.

When Mrs. Hotchkick had sufficiently recovered her senses to bring a lighted lantern from the house, she and her husband proceeded to ascertain the amount of damage done. A broken up wagon was all that could be found until, lowering the lantern by a clothes-line into the well, the short stub of a tail was revealed, standing proudly erect

in the midst of the dark waters. That was the end of a long-suffering horse.

Hotchkick, nursing his anger, went into the house and went to bed. It had been an unlucky day with him, for, as I afterwards learned, he had been to Boston to secure the aid of a lawyer in bringing a suit for damages against me, but had met with no encouragement.

"How about that paper which we came here to obtain?" said I to Pelegon, when we were once more by ourselves.

"Oh! I have it," he answered. "I took the little bureau drawer and all there was in it — for I had no time to make selections — while Marm Hotchkick was bounding out of the house, thinking there was a mad dog at her heels."

We repaired to the wood-shed, lighted a torch, and made ready to examine the note which referred to Pelegon.

"I fear," said I, after a moment's reflection, "we are engaged in bad business; for if this paper is really important in the matter of discovering the crime which has robbed you of birthright, you will be suspected of taking it. Then Mrs. Hotchkick's fright and the death of the horse will be charged to you also.

"Certainly," responded Pelegon. "I will take the papers right back and put them where I found them."

"Hold the torch while I read the note about you," I said.

Pelegon did so, and I carefully read the document.

"Yes," I remarked, after having folded it, "the handwriting is that of a woman, but it is not that of a mother. There is no heart in it."

"Let us burn it in the torch," pleaded the boy.

"No," I replied; "I will keep it in my possession, hoping that in some way it will be the means of discovering guilt and rewarding innocence."

"But won't I be suspicioned?" asked Pelegon, whose imagination was again tortured by the vision of wrathful Hotchkick.

Again I remained silent, wholly absorbed in thought.

When at last I spoke, it was only to say: "Hear those mice! I wish we could catch one."

"I know where they have a nest," answered the boy. "I fixed a place for them, myself, and I used to keep them for pets, and thought a good deal of them, too."

"Let me look at the nest," said I.

Pelegon climbed upon the wood, reached over behind a beam, took out a little box, and removed the cover.

"Oh, look!" he exclaimed. "Here are young ones. Little bits of things no bigger than a bumble-bee, and not a hair on them!"

"Good!" said I. "They are just what I want," and taking a knife, I proceeded to cut a small hole in the corner of the back end of the drawer. I then used the sharp point of the blade for denting the surface around the aperture until it had every appearance of being the workmanship of a mouse.

This done, I tore some of the papers which had been found in the drawer into very small fragments, of which I soon had enough to build a nest which any little rodent would have been proud to own. Then I carefully placed the five baby mice in their new bed, laid them away in the bottom of the drawer, and bade Pelegon return it to its proper place in the bureau.

Next day, what Hotchkick told his wife was that "the pesky, blarsted mice had got into the bureau and made a terrible muss with his papers, while the note about Pelegon was teetotally chawed up."

CHAPTER V.

IN JAIL.

MRS. CRUDELL was called a Christian. She was considered such by her towns-people, who judged her entirely by her public acts and professions, never having much opportunity to observe her in and about her home and household. She had been baptized, taken into the Swampton church, elected to offices in the various societies and undertakings of the church of which she was a member, and was regarded as quite a shining light in the denominational firmament.

Although Mrs. Crudell was always exceedingly amiable while engaged in official duties in the presence of her sisters, she nevertheless suffered from the confirmed habit of losing her temper when annoyed by the homely affairs of domestic life.

Christians as well as philosophers have their inconsistencies. I believe I have a few myself. Theoretically I hold that God rules the universe in every particular, and that through infinite love he will eventually right all wrongs, fully and freely compensating every person who may have suffered temporary injustice. This theory, however, does not in the least prevent my soul from becoming hot with indignation whenever I see dumb animals or innocent children abused. It is painful to record, although truth compels

the acknowledgment, that I am liable, on occasion, to undergo what might be termed wrathful insanity, as, for instance, when I almost succeeded in making a poor quality of jelly of John Hotchkick, on the memorable occasion when Pelegon was nearly drowned in the Concord River.

One day Mrs. Crudell was dreadfully cross. The explanation is this: On the previous evening she had delivered an earnest religious address. Every one who heard it believed that her words were made eloquent with the spirit of Christian love. She zealously exhorted her brothers and sisters to live lives of gentleness and affection, etc., etc.

Those who have never thrown their whole soul into a public address, do not realize the after consequences. What does such an expenditure involve but that the very energy and vitality of the speaker are perilously reduced. Thus one may vehemently urge the multitude to resist temptation, while he himself, by that very appeal, is exhausting the very power which he himself will next day need in order to follow his own advice.

So it came to pass that Mrs. Crudell arose on the morning following her rhetorical effort, feeling quite nervous, and consequently irritable. Finding the cat at the foot of her bed,—an occurrence quite contrary to the rules which she had made for the government of cats,—she seized the luckless animal by that long and sensitive portion of its anatomy which is always the last thing we see when a cat turns a corner, and attempted to throw Miss Tabby violently against the floor.

But somehow a cat is wonderfully active. This one in particular, although taken up when soundly asleep, and hastily discharged from a most effective slinging-machine, found plenty of time before parting with her mistress to awake,

stretch every nerve, turn a grand somersault, and drive her claws into Mrs. Crudell's bare arm.

The exasperated woman now uttered a cry, in which some slang words might have been detected. She hated slang, and the fact that she had allowed herself to use it served only to increase her anger, and when she saw the cat still sitting on the bed, audaciously looking at her, her rage became towering as she pronounced the same judgment on the animal that, through all past ages, has been sacredly reserved for infidels.

The cat seized the first opportunity to leave the house, and was possessed of too much feline sense to return for her breakfast.

Mrs. Crudell's little boy, three years of age, was less fortunate. He cried because the cat had gone, and was sternly told to "shut up." Then he cried the louder, and his mother struck him for disobedience. More crying and more striking followed, till the little fellow was almost strangled trying to suppress the sobs which Nature had provided for his relief, but which were exceedingly objectionable to the woman with unstrung nerves. At breakfast the moaning child could eat nothing, for his veins were full of rushing fever. This of itself made him fretful, and the mother's patience was so completely exhausted that matters grew worse instead of better.

When, at last, this trembling victim of maternal wrath sought safety by crawling out at the door, and was so luckless as to fall into the dirt, he was immediately seized by the hair, cuffed sharply on the ear, and dragged over the door-sill, without regard to consequences. His screams were now so piercing that Mrs. Crudell forcibly held her hand over his little mouth, creating at once an agony and a danger,

the seriousness of which it is hardly possible to suppose she could have comprehended. Then she thought of the dark closet, the very mention of which filled the boy's tender heart with unspeakable torment, and into this dreaded place she savagely thrust him, saying, as she tightly closed the door, that he must stay there until a great black bear would come to tear him all to pieces.

It was just at this moment that I happened to be returning from a somewhat lengthy morning walk. While coming over the brow of a hill not far from the house, I had been an unwilling and unobserved witness to Mrs. Crudell's treatment of her child. Such a scene was my poison.

What though my philosophy assured me that sometime in God's eternity that child would be richly compensated for all its wrongs? It requires hours of the closest reasoning to ascend all the logical steps which justify such a conclusion, while it takes but one second to behold cruelty; and it is generally the one second, instead of the hours of logical reasoning, which decides a man's conduct. The heart never aspires to climb those dizzy heights where intellect is victorious, for it has a world of its own into which philosophy is never allowed to intrude.

So it was at the moment of which I am writing. For the time being I was not a philosopher but an avenger.

Not stopping to reflect I rushed madly into the house, seized the woman by the arm, and shook her till she fell. I then hurried to the closet, where I found the child in an almost fatal convulsion, its unconscious paroxysms being exceedingly painful to behold.

Mrs. Crudell, not knowing who I was, and mistaking me for a desperado, set up a series of shrieks which seemed intended to wake the dead.

"Come, come! Get up here and behave yourself!" I exclaimed, at the same time lending a hand to assist her. "Look to your child, in that pitiful condition."

But a new development was about to open. The woman's stentorian outcry had alarmed Mr. Crudell, who had been working in a field not far away, and now he arrived at the house just in time to see me laying hold of the woman in the attempt to help her up.

"Oh, husband! take him off! He is trying to kill me!" was her excited appeal.

Of course the husband could do nothing less than to seize the supposed outlaw, and he immediately did so in quite a rough manner, being a much stronger man than myself.

I ought not to have resisted, but I did, and the exciting combat which followed was such an unpleasant affair that its record shall have no place on these pages.

In the afternoon of the same day a warrant was issued by the court, causing me to be arrested and thrown into jail, charged, first, with assault and battery on Mrs. Crudell; and charged, second, with assault and battery on Mr. Crudell.

Perhaps it is not strange that almost the entire population of Swampton arrived hastily at the conclusion that they had secured a criminal of the deepest dye. Indeed, there were those who stood ready, at a moment's notice, to join a mob and lynch me. News-mongers gloated over sensational accounts of my infamy, while Mrs. Crudell was the recipient of boundless sympathy and laudation. In Parson Drowthers' sermon on the following Sunday, she was spoken of as a noble woman, who had been foully attacked by a ruffian.

John Hotchkick told his wife that he was not the least bit surprised, for he had "knowed" all the time that I was a "blarsted bad man," and would come to a bad end.

Mrs. Hotchkick told her husband that she "could n't see for the life of her what the Lord was thinkin' on when he made such a wretched wretch for to be a pester to decent folks."

Parson Drowthers told Mrs. Crudell, while holding his lips very close to her tiny ear, that, in his opinion, the man who had dared to lay his foul hands on her sacred person was now in a fair way to receive evidence of God's eternal wrath.

Mrs. Crudell told Parson Drowthers, while holding her rosy lips close to his enormous ear, that her nervous system was so unstrung by the attack which had been made upon her, that if it were not for the comforting words of her dear pastor she should pray for the angel of death to release her.

Immediately Parson Drowthers lisped other comforting words into her delicate organ of hearing.

Mr. Wordswell, as also his wife and daughter, spoke only in the kindest terms of me, and determined to do everything in their power to save my person and my reputation from harm.

There was only one human being who shed tears over the unhappy occurrence, and that one was Pelegon Jinny. Day and night he sustained a grief of which few hearts are capable. He who had never known a father seemed now to have lost one. For the first time in his life he prayed, and his prayer was that his friend might be taken out of prison, or else that he might go there, too, and be shut up with him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FURIES.

ILL-FATED Swampton lay in the path of the tornado. The day had been unusually hot, and at four o'clock in the afternoon a deathly stillness prevailed. Not a leaf quivered, and the lightest of downy dust, failing to find a current in the air, twirled about itself in a lazy way, hesitating whether to rise or fall.

Was Nature sleeping, dying, or what? Nothing of the kind. She was busily engaged in her laboratory, brewing a terrible tempest, which, in a moment more, would be turned loose on the face of the earth, to carry death and destruction to the children of men.

A large, leaden-colored cloud came rolling up from the west, when it was suddenly brought into contact with another, coming from the south. Soon after a terrific noise resounded from Swampton's great pine woods, and people saw a swath of trees mown down like grass before some tremendous scythe. An irresistible giant twisted them about, tore them from the ground, and tossed them hastily aside, as though he would make a road for the forth-coming chariots of a celestial army.

A spiral column hung from cloud to earth, like a black, insatiate serpent let loose from chains and night and woe. With forked tongue of fire it lapped great mouthfuls from

garden, field, and forest, crunched them to dust and splinters, and then ejected them into the face of heaven, as though its wrath would vent itself on the Most High.

Grappling Mr. Wordswell's barn, it carried it to a place within a few feet of the front door of his house, and there set it down without doing him any further damage. It visited John Hotchkick's orchard, leaving him not a single fruit-tree, while it conveyed his fence, he knew not where, and scattered his precious wood-pile until not one stick was left upon another.

Mrs. Hotchkick's hens were almost entirely denuded of feathers, yet were not seriously injured, although exhibiting considerable surprise over their Greek slave condition.

Thus did the elephantine monster march on, reaching out here and there to wind his huge proboscis around some giant oak, which was pulled up as easily as though it had been a tender herb.

Whenever the storm struck a house or hollow object of any kind, it seemed to envelop the whole structure in a very light, etherial atmosphere, the result being that everything was blown outward by the sudden expansion of the confined denser air.

Coming to the village the whirl danced up and down in such apparent glee that it jumped some houses completely, and fell heavily down upon others in the same line of march.

Striking Swampton church its ecstasy must have changed to vengeance, for it hurled every wall outward with terrible force, while the roof went upward for some distance and then paused, as though waiting for all else to be removed, when it descended upon the church floor with a great crash.

Oh, how this monster from the "cave of winds" writhed and darted and hissed! How fearful the contortions of its

body, and with what whiz and rattle and thud it sped onward in its work of devastation and death!

Reaching the Concord River at last, it greedily swallowed a great volume of water, and thus, having overladen its stomach, fell to the earth, a helpless invalid, while the zephyrs of gentleness and peace took the dying cyclone in their loving arms and bore it softly away.

And now the villagers sallied forth from cellars and hiding-places, to see what was left to show of their worldly goods. The spot where their church had stood was almost the first to attract attention, and to call forth expressions of grief. Hastening to examine the inexplicable ruin, they were soon standing upon the prostrate roof, looking far and near for the remaining portions of their temple of worship.

Suddenly a feeble human cry was heard, issuing from the *débris* beneath their feet. "Quick! quick!" exclaimed the excited villagers. "Somebody is buried here. Bring an axe,—crow-bar! Take hold! Lift the roof! Hurry!"

There was considerable delay before the proper tools could be had, and meanwhile the townsmen speculated upon the mystery of who the person was that had been in the church when the disaster occurred. No one could think of any good reason for visiting the house except during religious services. However, the period for surmising must be of short duration. Painful groans from below still continued, but were growing more and more feeble every moment. Axe and crow-bar were now at work, cutting and tearing away a portion of the roof. It seemed a time interminable before the rent was made large enough for a human body, and then it was not in the right place. Other shingles had to be torn off, other boards split, and other rafters cut asunder.

At last a human form was reached. Although the face was shockingly bruised and almost beyond recognition, there was no mistaking the man. He was Parson Drowthers. Strong arms were immediately thrown about him, while swift feet hurried toward the doctor's office, to which the suffering minister was conveyed for the medical or surgical assistance he so much needed.

"Where do you suffer most?" asked the physician, when he had given the patient a strong, stimulating drug.

"Is *she* dead?" faintly groaned Drowthers.

"Who?"

"She who was with me," came the whispered response.

The men who had brought the wounded clergyman to the office waited to hear no more, but rushed back to announce that a woman was buried in the same ruins.

Their speed was unnecessary, however, for others had discovered the crushed mortal, and were already bearing the remains away.

"They have found the woman!" exclaimed the doctor, looking out. "Here," he continued, addressing Lou Cra, who had just come in, "stay with this dying man while I see to the other person."

"Nothing to see about, for she is already dead," answered Lou Cra. But the doctor hurried on toward the scene of the terrible catastrophe.

"Did you say that Mrs. Crudell was dead?" inquired the minister, manifesting a strange, wild energy.

"Yes," answered Lou Cra, "I said she was dead, but I did not emphasize *dead* as I might if she had been permitted to live. Oh, you need n't stare at me in that way, as though you would try to make me out! Do you remember Louisa Cracraft? Oh, yes! I see you do not forget. Here then

you behold Louisa Cracraft herself, and, although the hand of death is already upon you, he shall not take you away until you have received my curse."

"I deserve it," groaned the minister. "God forgive me for that marriage certificate."

"Ah! and will you now undo the wrong you have done me?" asked Lou Cra.

"I was greatly tempted," continued the minister, paying no attention to the question. "My salary was small. I could not live on it. I needed the money. Huntgill was a wicked man. I wonder if he is dead and if I shall meet him. He was in Colorado the last I heard. Come closer to me, my good woman."

Lou Cra bent over the wretched clergyman.

"Tell everybody," said he, speaking with great effort, "to be good and kind to Pelegon."

"Whose child is he?" demanded Lou Cra, in stern tones.

"Oh, don't speak so! Tell him to find Huntgill, and then he—I—" the words of the minister died upon his lips, and in another moment his breath had forever ceased.

His tragic end, as also that of Mrs. Crudell, was productive of much mourning.

Lou Cra,—or Crazy Lou, as she was frequently called,—continued to be Swampton's mystery.

On the day of the funeral she visited me in jail, telling me all that Parson Drowthers had said in his last moments.

I was intensely interested.

"What could he have meant?" I inquired.

"I dare not tell you," she replied, "for it is so related to my own misfortunes that I know I should go mad again if I were to talk over and reveal to you the terrible experiences of my life."

LOU CRA VISITS THE PRISON.

"Do you mean to say that you have sometime been mad?" I asked.

"Yes, but that is a secret for you only. Don't tell! You have been my best friend, and I confide in you. They took me to an asylum. It was dreadful. I was there an eternity; then the doctor said I was cured and could go away, but he made me promise that I would never talk with any one about my wrongs,—about my dear brother who died a bachelor and worth a million; about the counterfeit marriage certificate; about the child that was brought into court to establish the monstrous claim of the conspirators; about Huntgill, who did the kidnapping, and all the hateful work; about Pelegon,—but that is not his true name; about the murder of the school-master,—oh, no! that has happened since, but it belongs to the same web."

"But tell me—" I began.

"Stop!" exclaimed the woman, becoming excited. "How dare you question me when I told you I was under promise not to talk on these subjects? Go to Colorado! Find Huntgill. He is the man. Compel him to tell all. Save a noble boy from a disgraceful name. Return him to his kin! Do good! I am not—"

She became almost raving, so I checked and quieted her as best I could.

My mind was soon made up. I would go to Colorado and take Pelegon with me.

Next day I was out of jail, for it was decided by the plaintiff that there should be no trial on the charges against me.

Mr. Crudell had been closeted with a lawyer, from whom he received a few hints that set him thinking. At first he was determined to have me punished to the full extent of the law's power; but when he was told that my attorney

would proceed to show that I had possessed no other motive than to protect a little child from dangerous abuse, and that the lawyer would very likely call witnesses from among Mr. Crudell's neighbors, and, perhaps, be able to prove that Mrs. Crudell was in the habit of punishing her children rather harshly, the husband exclaimed,

"That is enough! Let the case be dropped."

This explains why the State's attorney ordered a *nolle prosequi* to be entered upon the records opposite "The Commonwealth *versus* August Berkeley," and why, forthwith, I received an honorable discharge.

CHAPTER VII.

A POINT GAINED.

IT was announced that the Governor of the Commonwealth would address a mass meeting at L——. Everybody wanted to hear him. Pelegon and Ozelia stole away in the absence of Mr. Wordswell, and greatly enjoyed walking to the place, a distance of three miles. It was much further by way of the road, but Pelegon was acquainted with a foot-path through the woods which led straight to L——. They were so long in getting there, even by this short cut,—so many times did they have to stop to rest or to gather the beautiful autumn leaves,—that they were caught in a shower at the last minute, and the Governor's speech was ended before they arrived. However, they found no cause for complaint. Too young and happy were they to feel any bitterness over such vicissitudes. They enjoyed each other. Any additional source of enjoyment was superfluous. Oh, that the greater part of humanity could be thus classified,—two by two,—and that each couple could find such complete happiness in each other that the deprivation of external blessings would scarcely be felt!

But Pelegon and Ozelia must return. There was not time to walk by the circuitous route. Both of them realized the propriety of getting home before dark, especially as Mr. Wordswell himself was expected to be there at an early hour.

Our young friends now had a pleasant walk, under difficulties. To older and less sentimental—or shall we say to less affectionate—persons, it would have been extremely vexatious. The rain had beaten down the bushes and small branches until the narrow path in many places was completely obstructed.

Pelegon went ahead, shoved away the bush, and shook the heavy drops of water upon himself until there was not a dry thread in his clothing, but so faithfully did he do love's work that Ozelia was kept dry and comfortable.

Midway through the woods they came to a low, swampy place, where, for a considerable distance, the water stood on the surface of sufficient depth to cover Ozelia's shoe-tops.

Here was a predicament.

First they tried to go around the marsh; but it extended a long distance, both to the right and to the left, while alders and poison ivy formed an almost impenetrable jungle.

Ozelia suggested returning to L—— and taking the road. Just then a peal of thunder resounded through the western sky, and it was evident that another shower was approaching.

Justified by the emergency, the girl now proposed taking off her shoes and stockings and wading across to dry land. To this Pelegon would not listen, for he feared she might take cold and imperil her life.

His purpose was soon formed. Making an invalid chair of his strong arms he insisted on carrying Ozelia across the treacherous bog. At first she modestly hesitated, but finally threw her arms lovingly about his neck, and submitted gracefully and resignedly to that mode of conveyance.

Had either of them known how dangerous was the ground over which they were to pass, the feat would not have been undertaken; for under the wild-grass turf was a jelly-like

mire, three or four feet in depth. But Pelegon cautiously selected the toughest of the bog on which to step, and, by walking rapidly, was able to get safely across with his precious charge.

"There!" said he, almost out of breath, "I would not have missed this opportunity, even to have been made Governor of the State," and then, in putting her down, her blushing cheek came so near,—he could not help it, the impulsive rogue,—for the first time in his life he kissed her. Was she angry? Perhaps so, for she immediately returned the osculation.

Then she scolded him for being so bold, and while he was doing the best he could to feel sorry, a loud, rasping voice burst forth on the forest stillness, startling them both like discovered culprits.

"Say, you there! Who are yer? How do yer git across this ere place?"

It was the voice of Mrs. Hotchkick. She, too, had been to hear the Governor, and as the new "hoss" had not yet arrived, she had placed dependence on her well-tried bodily endurance and the short cut through the woods, to get her safely home in time to milk the cows and prepare supper.

Ozelia counseled Pelegon to make no reply to the woman but to leave her in ignorance as to who he was, for evidently her defective sight prevented her knowing.

"No," said Pelegon, "it would not be right to go away and refuse her assistance now that the night is coming on. She is afraid as death of wetting her feet, and, although she has no softness in her heart, she has been the only mother to me I have ever known. Besides, I never feel quite so happy as when I return good for evil. Yes, you must let me do what I can for her."

"Nobly spoken!" exclaimed Ozelia. "I am proud of you."

So Pelegon recrossed the slough, and in few words told Mrs. Hotchkick that he would carry her over. She seemed slightly affected by this manifestation of generous impulse, but expressed her doubt as to his ability to perform the task. He believed that her weight was less than that of Ozelia, and therefore assured her that she could safely trust herself in his hands.

After threatening him with dire vengeance if he should let her fall, she reluctantly consented to a trial of the proposed plan.

Alas!

Alackaday!

Oh! Oh! Oh!

Help! Help!

Pelegon had missed his reckoning in estimating that Mrs. Hotchkick was lighter than Ozelia. True, she was not of great size, but what there was of her was mostly gristle and bone. Perhaps his strength was already somewhat exhausted. Besides, his sinews were not now supported by the magic power of love. It is one thing to have one's neck affectionately encircled by soft and tremulous arms, but quite another to feel the sharp elbows of fleshless old age pressing upon one's shoulders.

Pelegon was only half way across, when he was so overcome that he must needs stop to rest.

Fatal stop!

The frail turf could not sustain him and his burden. It broke. In an instant he sunk waist deep in soft mud.

Mrs. Hotchkick shrieked, kicked, struggled, and then fell flat on her back into the water. By herculean effort Pelegon

assisted her to her feet, but the next instant the sod broke beneath her also, and she went down so rapidly as to imagine herself going through the earth.

The brave boy kept cool, in more senses than one, and made several ineffectual efforts to rescue himself and the hysterical woman; but the foundation on which they stood was so slimy and hard that they could scarcely move without falling.

Ozelia was half frightened to death, but Pelegon reassured her by declaring that he was in no danger, and requesting her to go for me. The poor girl made all possible haste, and arrived at her home quite exhausted, just as the storm, whose approach has already been mentioned, broke forth in great fury.

I waited only to provide myself with a rope and a lantern, and then, following the direction given by Ozelia, tried to find the foot-path in the woods; but so dark had it now become that I was lost at the very outset.

Coming near to John Hotchkick's house, it occurred to me that nothing better could be done than to draft him into the service, although I did not then know (for Ozelia's mind had been too full of Pelegon to tell me) that Mrs. Hotchkick was also imbedded in the slough.

Without designing it I did a splendid piece of detective work; for the moment John Hotchkick saw me with a rope in my hand, and heard me say I had come to get him to show me the way into the woods, he turned as white as a ghost.

"*I didn't kill any one!*" stammered he, thrown entirely off his guard.

"Ah!" said I; "so you think I have come with a crowd, to hang you to the nearest tree. Not quite so bad as that

yet, but I want you to show me to the mire pit, for Pelegon is in there and must be helped out."

"That's none of my business!" exclaimed Hotchkick, immediately recovering his courage, and adopting his naturally surly tone.

"Do as I command you, without wasting words," I answered. "You should know by this time that I am not a man to be trifled with; especially, by you."

"But the cows are not milked."

"Get on your hat and come along."

"I can't leave my wife. She 's sick abed."

"She will be enough sight better off without you," I replied.

"But I must wait till the shower is over," he pleaded, "for this rain would be the death of me."

"Look here!" said I; "if you do not follow me this instant I will give this rope back to *the boys*, and tell them to go ahead and do as they please with it."

That was enough. The coward submitted like a whipped spaniel. Where shall be found such tyrannical rule as that of guilty self-consciousness?

Hotchkick led the way to the mire-hole, and I threw the rope to Pelegon, whom we soon pulled ashore.

"Who is with you?" I demanded, greatly surprised at seeing another form faintly revealed by the dim light of the lantern.

"It's me!" answered the woman herself.

Hotchkick was astonished.

"Ah, I see!" said I, turning toward him. "You told me your wife was sick abed, but neglected to state where the bed was located. However, as you begged the privilege of staying with her you now have the opportunity." And I

could scarcely resist the temptation of shoving him at once into the dirty pool.

Then how he abused his poor wife. In his unchecked wrath he said the meanest and most hatefel things to her that it is in the power of man to utter, declaring again and again that she gave him more trouble than her neck was "wuth."

"Come, come!" said I, growing more and more impatient at his conduct; "throw the rope to your wife and pull her out."

He hurled the rope at her head with no little violence, and commanded her to "ketch holt."

She would not lift a hand. She had the sulks. When I undertook to reason with her she declared she would rather stay where she was and die than to live any longer with such an old bear as John.

I admired her grit, and secretly commended her choice. Indeed, I cannot begin to describe the exalted height to which that woman suddenly rose in my estimation. I knew then that she was not wholly irredeemable.

"I'll fetch her!" exclaimed Hotchkick; and he made a noose and then tried to lasso her. She spitefully threw off the rope as many times as it caught her.

"If yer throw it off agin," declared he, "I'll leave yer thar till yer dead!"

Again she removed it.

He started homeward.

"Hold!" said I. "You shall not leave here until you rescue your wife. It is your own fault that she prefers death to your company. Had you spoken one word of kindness to her in the first place, the trouble would now be ended."

"What do yer want done?" he asked in surly tones.

"I want you to go into that mud-hole and take hold of your wife gently, and then Pelegon and I will pull you both out."

"I won't do it!" he muttered.

"Then," said I, "this rope goes back to *the boys*."

"What boys?" he ventured boldly to ask.

"The boys who *loved their school-master*," I replied with impressive earnestness, my eyes fixed keenly on his countenance to study the effect of my words.

As I anticipated, the betrayal of his guilt was most decidedly marked. It was a good night for detective work.

He waited to hear no more, but rushed desperately toward his wife, and was fortunate enough to keep on the surface until near enough to reach her. In trying to drag her out he soon went down to her level. A struggle now ensued, the like of which never was described in books. First one then the other disappeared and re-appeared. Twenty years of suppressed tiger found sudden vent in Mrs. Hotchkick. All that time the man had lived with her without knowing her. All that time she had been a magazine of dynamite, which matrimonial oppression had succeeded in keeping dormant.

In about two minutes Hotchkick learned more concerning the possibilities of womankind than he had ever known before in his life; and at the end of that brief period he was as full of mud as he was of the subject.

But every earthly exhibition, no matter how entertaining, must come to an end. There would have been a death to record, if not two, had not Pelegon and I skillfully lassoed both parties and drawn them to land, which required all the strength we could unitedly exert.

"Now, John Hotchkick, listen to me!" said the irate woman, as soon as she could find breath to speak. "Hereafter you'll treat me decently or I'll tell the whole world jest what you don't want told. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," meekly replied the man.

"And do you promise?"

"Yes."

"Shake!" said I, enthusiastically, as I extended my hand to the woman. "You are worthy of my fondest admiration."

The request was unnecessary, for she was already shaking from center to circumference, but she extended her palm, and I heartily enjoyed grasping it, although it was covered with mire.

"I'm very sorry," she said to me in low tones, when her husband had strode on ahead, "that you are to leave this neighborhood."

"Why so?" I inquired.

"I should feel safer if you—if you—were here."

"Business calls me to Colorado," I observed.

"An' shall you take Pelegon?"

"Yes."

"I'm very, very sorry," she answered sadly.

Next evening Pelegon and Ozelia sat alone on the porch, and communed face to face, hand to hand, and heart to heart.

"Yes, I shall come back as soon as I can," said he, "but you are still attending school, and you will be admired by hosts of young men, and forget all about me."

"Not so," answered Ozelia. "I am now old enough to know my own mind, and I am certain I can never love another with that perfection of love which I have given to you."

"And will you promise me," said Pelegon, "that whatever may happen you will be— "

"Yes," replied Ozelia, divining what was unspoken, and having heard a sound near by which hastened her answer.

"She will promise nothing of the sort!" exclaimed Mr. Wordswell in a stern voice, pushing open the window shutters immediately behind them. "Pelegon, hearken to me," he continued. "While I am willing to acknowledge that you are an honest, conscientious, and kind-hearted boy, nevertheless, if the truth must be told, my daughter shall not be called MRS. JINNY so long as it is in my power to prevent. Besides, she is as yet only a school-girl, and must not have her young and tender mind occupied with anything but her studies. It is my duty to protect her, and I will."

"You are right," said Pelegon, after a moment's silence, "and I ask your forgiveness for being so thoughtless as to forget that I can never carry my hateful name into respectable society. On Ozelia's own account, sir, I submit to your authority, and hence will not ask my dearest friend to share the wrong with which I am cursed."

"Come, Ozelia," said Mr. Wordswell, "it is getting late, and you had better go into the house."

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Ozelia, rising to obey, "Pelegon has promised that he will write me long letters about his travels, and I have promised to answer them. Now, papa, do tell us that we may correspond."

"No," replied Mr. Wordswell, "your social affiliation, as well as every other, must stop at once and forever."

Never before had these two young persons realized how painfully a few sharp words may cut the sensitive soul.

In the days that followed, after great changes had been

wrought, Pelegon remembered that he had attempted to ask Ozelia to become his companion for life, and that a sudden interruption had caused the girl to answer "yes," before the question was finished. Ozelia also remembered. Was it an engagement? If so, was it broken off? Neither of them was quite certain.

CHAPTER VIII.

HUNTGILL.

AFTER a pleasant journey, Pelegon and I reached Denver, and established our headquarters in a comfortable boarding-house, from which we immediately began making excursions—frequently of several days' duration—to the various towns and parts of the territory, in prosecution of our search for Huntgill. Our intervals of rest—for the constant stage and horseback traveling were very fatiguing—were spent in Denver; where, in repairing our exhausted energies, we greatly enjoyed the most delightful rides on most delightful avenues; beholding the grand panorama of the white-capped mountains, forming a semicircle extending half way around the city, and where, too, we could breathe the sweet, invigorating, and healthful air, as it came, laden with the perfume of pine, hemlock, and cedar.

It was while we were thus enjoying one of these pleasant rides, that Pelegon suddenly seized me by the arm, and drew my attention to a man on the sidewalk.

"Who is he?" I inquired.

Pelegon was so excited he could scarcely reply.

"Watch him! Don't let him get away, for heaven's sake!" he exclaimed in husky tones.

"Do you know him? Have you seen him before?"

"Drive on," said Pelegon, speaking hurriedly, and giving no heed to my questions. "We must follow him at a distance, and keep him within view, at all hazards."

A more forbidding specimen of humanity than the subject of this episode one seldom sees. He was short, thick-set, and exceedingly muscular, having a countenance of the bull-dog cast. His dress was rather extravagant, while the amount of jewelry he wore indicated that, in some way, he had obtained more money than was necessary for the procurement of his daily bread.

"Tell me who he is," I demanded.

"I don't know," replied Pelegon.

"Then why this agitation?"

"I have seen him before."

"When?"

"As long ago as I can remember. He is the very man that came into my mind when I was drowning, and whom I told you about."

"Are you sure?" asked I, my own interest now raised to the highest pitch.

"Sure as I'm alive; for the instant my eyes rested on him, it seemed as though I had always known him, and I shuddered all over."

While we thus talked, the stranger turned into a liquor saloon, and was lost from sight.

"Now what shall we do?" asked Pelegon.

"Wait a moment," I answered. "Let us consider the case. He must not know he is watched. We must make his acquaintance without his suspecting we have any design."

Weeks came and went.

The man whom Pelegon and I had seen enter the saloon,

and whom Pelegon recognized as one whose countenance had haunted him ever since his infancy, was still a stranger, notwithstanding the well-studied efforts of both of us to make his acquaintance.

So extremely reticent was he, that he avoided every social approach that our ingenuity could devise. If he were asked questions, his answers were given in gruff monosyllables, generally evasive in character, while on matters concerning his personal history he deigned not to impart any information.

At his boarding-place, his landlady knew nothing of him except that he paid promptly and liberally for his accommodations, was quiet and peaceable, attending strictly to his own business, which was—nobody knew what.

The saloon-keepers reported that he was a good fellow, rather odd in his ways, spent money freely, drank hard, but was never drunk, gambled a little, but kept equally cool whether he lost or won, and was altogether too good a customer to lose.

The "oldest citizen," however, being thoroughly disinterested, did not hesitate to reveal some well-grounded suspicions against the character of this person, who, he said, had been hanging 'round the city for several years.

"What is his name?" I inquired.

"It changes like the leper's spots," replied the "oldest citizen;" "but as long ago as I fust knowed him, he was called Huntgill; and at that time he belonged to a gang of three or four as bloodthirsty outlaws as these parts were ever afflicted with."

"Huntgill!" exclaimed Pelegon. "That's the very name Lou Cra so often repeats in her muttering; and she has always told me to find him."

"What became of Huntgill's partners?" I inquired.

"Wal, I reckon they disappeared about as suddently as men ever did," answered the "oldest citizen." "Ye see, pard, this gang of desp'radoes was partic'larly hard on adventurers, who felt obleeged to pass through here on their way up the mountains, where they expected to make their fortunes. If they fetched money with 'em from hum, they sometimes did n't go any further than this town. But if they went through into the minin' regions, and were lucky enough to find anything worth while, they stood a putty good chance of bein' overhauled on their way back. And the poortry of the thing is, that them what was stopped was stopped forever; an' they had mothers an' sisters, an' what ye call sweethearts at hum, who waited an' waited, an' don't know till this day what's the matter."

One day Pelegon and I were riding on horseback toward the mountains, when we saw Huntgill, also on horseback, some distance ahead. He occasionally glanced behind him, and no sooner did he discover that he was followed than he put spurs to his horse, and a few minutes later was lost from sight.

"It is evident," said I, "that he does not intend to be overtaken. Let us examine the footprints of his horse, that we may be able to trace his course."

We pressed forward vigorously, and succeeded at last in tracking the man into a narrow gorge whose walls on either side were at least a thousand feet high and almost perpendicular. Indeed, there were places where rocks completely overhung the trail, shutting out all the rays of the noon-day sun. Evidently the ravine was not much frequented, for the path, if path it could be called, was blocked with numerous boulders, so large that our horses could hardly be forced

to jump over them. A small stream rattled and tumbled along through the deep defile, and this it was necessary to cross and recross many times, while the walls of the gorge were so close together that in places the rivulet washed them both.

"Stop!" said Pelegon, scarcely above a whisper, as we rounded a turn in the chasm. "There he is! At least, there is his horse tied to a tree."

"Doubtless he is lying in ambush, awaiting our coming," said I, not being endowed with that blind defiance of danger which had taken sudden possession of Pelegon. "I think we had better not go any farther, just at present, for 'discretion is the better part of valor.'"

"I cannot follow any such advice," answered the boy hastily. "I must and will go forward. This is the man who carried me to Hotchkick's, who has haunted all my dreams, and it is he who knows what it is my right to know, concerning myself. I must go to him now, for it may soon be too late."

"Then you shall not go alone," I answered.

We continued on till we reached the tree to which Huntgill's horse was tied, and directly in front we discovered where a large rock had been riven from the cliff above and rolled down into the trail, making it impossible for the animal to proceed.

However, as footmen could easily clamber over the obstruction, we dismounted, secured our horses, and pursued our journey on foot, with as little delay as possible.

Seeing nothing of Huntgill, although keeping a constant and cautious watch, we were soon surprised at coming to the head of the gorge, where a beautiful waterfall, all tattered and torn, leaped from a height of four or five hundred

feet. Here we must stop; for any further advance was impossible. Where, then, was the man we sought? Since entering the deep ravine there had been no place visible where a human being could climb the precipitous walls, and to have passed a person in such narrow confines without seeing him was scarcely conceivable.

After pausing a few moments, vainly endeavoring to solve the mystery, we returned to the place where the horses had been left, only to be again nonplussed at finding neither Huntgill nor his beast. All was silent as the tomb, save the constant rumbling of the mountain-born creek, as it hurried from the shady rift to the open fields, seeking, as it were, eternal rest in its ocean home.

Late in the evening, when we returned to the city, we learned that Huntgill had arrived an hour before, that he had delivered the horse to its owner, paying liberally therefor, while no one could tell where he had been or why he went.

"My theory is this," said I to Pelegon, when we had been refreshed by a night of much-needed rest. "Up in that gorge there is a cave where a man may hide himself. That cave very likely contains a large quantity of stolen gold. Its situation must be between the place where the horse was tied and the waterfall at which we were stopped. As this distance is only about half a mile — "

"We can find the cave!" exclaimed Pelegon, all aglow with excitement.

More easily said than accomplished.

Day after day we searched diligently for Huntgill's secret resort in the great gorge of the mountain, but nothing was discovered except the mere mouth of a cave, into which one could pass but a few feet before coming in contact with a

stone, around or over which, nothing larger than a cat could crawl, while owing to its great size and firmness, it was pronounced an immovable barrier.

"What must be our next move?" asked Pelegon.

"It is quite certain," said I, that we are throwing away time in trying to find Huntgill's cave. Why not wait till he goes again, and have him show it to us. I have ascertained at the livery stable that whenever he decides to take one of his long and solitary rides he invariably engages his horse on the evening before starting. A judicious investment of money and caution on our part will be sufficient to enable us to find out from the hostler when Huntgill is ready to start on his next journey. Without waiting for daylight, we can get off before him, hasten to the mountains and secrete ourselves at the summit of the precipice, where we can be ready when he arrives, to overlook all his movements. How does that plan strike you?"

"It is perfect!" exclaimed Pelegon, his every feature beaming with the prospect of speedy success.

CHAPTER IX.

THAT HORRID NAME.

A VERY charming young lady, tall and stately in form, graceful in every movement, animated in every feature, healthful in every nerve and fiber, modest in every expression, having light brown wavy hair, deep blue eyes, into whose rich depths no ravished vision could sufficiently penetrate, rosy lips, quite suggestive of sweetest kisses, so near and yet so far, a smooth, white, artistic hand, which one could scarcely touch without feeling an indefinable thrill, excellent conversational powers, a naturally merry heart, and an ever-aspiring intellect, both of which were tempered with religious intuition,—in fact, a woman whose excellent qualities and beautiful spirit might adorn and glorify an angel,—such was Ozelia Wordswell.

> "Nature was here so lavish of her store
> That she bestowed until she had no more."

The earthly affection in which Ozelia lived, moved, and had her being was kept in sacred charge,—kept night and day, kept amid sunshine and storm, kept in its integrity, even while men of reputation, rank, and fortune sought, asked, kneeled, pleaded, and prayed for it, kept constantly and forever—for one who was absent, for one who could boast no reputation, rank, or fortune, and whose very name was a blighting curse.

Such is the independent spirit of true love. Such is woman at her best. Such was Ozelia Wordswell. Yet the time was not far away when temptation and frailty should meet and triumph in the very citadel of her heart.

Pelegon Jinny had steadily grown in affection toward Ozelia, notwithstanding he was not permitted even to write to her. But does any one suppose they did not correspond, and in a way, too, that no earthly power can prohibit? They did. The God in whom we live is the same great soul in whom our loved ones live. There is no gulf between them and us which affection cannot bridge. A mother has seen the death agony of her son as clearly as though it were before her eyes, although living mother and dying son were hundreds of miles apart.

Bathe and purify the spirit of man in the spirit of love, or of God, until finite and infinite can commingle without any friction of earthly properties, and immediately a kind of telegraphic communication is established whose extensions are immeasurable. Some share in this grand unity which love produces is occasionally vouchsafed to man, and thus there are souls whom seas or mountains can never separate. To those who are thus favored the world, in a sense, is already destroyed, the day of judgment is past, and, even here on earth, they have entered into that spiritual rest which could never be perfect so long as there were dusty paths to travel, high walls to climb, and stormy waters to cross, ere a friend could meet a friend.

The noble youth in the Rocky Mountains and the beautiful girl on the Atlantic shore, each thought, loved, and lived in that wonderful current which runs both ways at once, and every thought and every deep emotion of the one met and embraced every thought and deep emotion of the other,

till soul itself was touched by soul, and both were united in bonds inseparable. Thus it is that the most sacred intimacy is often born of absence, and promoted by distance.

But, alas! earth is not yet heaven, and heaven is terribly buffeted whenever it would set up its reign on earth.

To what extent are parents justified in attempting to control the affections of their daughters? This is a question no one can answer. To interfere in the slightest degree is dangerous, while to arbitrarily oppose is often fatal. Yet there are instances, and they are not rare, in which love is counterfeit, desire is passion of the baser sort, courtship is flirtation, plighted troth is romance, kissing is intoxication, the marriage altar a novelty, and matrimony itself an experiment. When, at last, the reckless experiment has been fairly tried, when the gold-fringed cloth on the altar has been taken away, when kissing has ceased to be even a momentary effervescence of feeling, when the hastily-plighted word has gone the way of other words equally idle, when passion has proved itself to be passion, simply that and nothing more, when flirtation has lost all charm, except it be transferred to forbidden ground, when courtship is transformed into the common bickering of low life — when this is all that is left of matrimony, and when the parent has had the judgment to foresee that this would be all, who shall condemn him for having sternly said to his cherished daughter, "It shall not be! You do not know your own heart. You exist under a delusion, and until your eyes are opened you must submit to authority"?

Yet, even when such is the case, there are few to sing the stern parent's praise.

Why not let the girl take her course? Oppose her, and the chances are she will do worse. She is like a flame

which is almost in contact with a magazine of terrible explosives. Will you rush forward and combat the fire? It may open your grave. Will you turn from it? Still it may open your grave. Unfortunate fathers and mothers! Whichever course you may decide to take, we have no censure to bestow. Where angels pity, men should not condemn.

One day, when Mr. Wordswell and his daughter were conversing together in that spirit of freedom which should always be encouraged between parent and child, but which, nevertheless, came at last to be discouraged by Mr. Wordswell, he said:

"No, Ozelia, you shall never, never marry that man, while I have power to interpose my will. I tell you to forget him, and never again even to mention his disagreeable name in my presence. You see, we must have some family pride. There, now, let us not discuss the matter any further. You know my decision, and are sufficiently discreet, I trust, to respect it. Before my only child should marry a *Jinny*, I would—but why make threats? The emergency will not arise. Good night, my daughter. Remember that it is only because I greatly love you that I so strenuously guard your own best welfare. Please do not weep; and forgive me if I have spoken more harshly than I should."

CHAPTER X.

CAUGHT AT LAST.

HUNTGILL had left notice at the livery stable that he would call for the fastest horse early the next morning.

Pelegon and I started several hours before daylight, and quietly headed our steeds toward Platte Cañon. With some difficulty we climbed the mountain, resting not till we found a place on the brow of the cliff where we could see into the deep gorge without danger of being discovered.

In due time Huntgill rode into the ravine and secured his horse to the same tree to which he had tied him on a previous occasion, as described in these pages.

This done, he stood for a few moments looking cautiously up and down the gorge, and then, having satisfied himself that no one was near, went quickly to the very cave which we had once examined, and which we had decided could not be entered, on account of the huge stone that obstructed the passage.

It might have been half an hour before Huntgill again appeared, when he immediately untied his horse, mounted, and rode swiftly away.

We now descended by a circuitous route, resolved on revisiting the strange cave in quest of new developments.

Coming to the underground chamber we discovered that fresh dirt had been piled against the base of the stone which barred the entrance. When we had removed this we saw that the great stone was nicely balanced on a pivot, and could be easily turned, were it not that it was firmly braced on the inner side. To reach under the stone and remove the iron bar that held it, was but the work of a moment, and then it was swung around on its central point until an entrance could be effected.

It must have required many strong hands to place this stone in the position it occupied, for evidently it was done by human ingenuity rather than by any freak of Nature.

No sooner were we fairly in the cave than we found that it divided into three branches, each of which extended into unrelieved darkness.

Fortunately matches had been brought, and a light was readily made.

The cave proved to be even a greater object of interest than I had anticipated. Two or three hundred feet from the entrance, and at the extreme end of the longest branch, behind a pile of stones, some of which had to be removed, we found various well-filled trunks, satchels, and boxes. Here was gold, in rich specimens of ore, in nuggets, and in dust. Here were silver bricks, and a large number of such precious stones as the Rocky Mountains afford. Here were miners' tools and clothing, and here were letters and mementoes that spoke of home and those for whom home had mournfully waited through many painful years. Here, indeed, was a robber's den, well furnished with the spoils of many a crime. Here was an explanation of the agonizing statement which has been often heard in our Eastern States:

"He went to the mines; he wrote us that he should soon be home; but we have never heard from him since."

I thought of this, and my soul was moved with sadness, horror, and indignation.

Both Pelegon and I, beginning to grow faint in the unwholesome air, started in haste to leave the cave. An ominous shadow darkened the entrance. At the same instant we recognized Huntgill. I drew my revolver, but was too late to prevent the criminal from pushing the balance stone around so that it completely cut off our exit. With all our might we threw ourselves against it, only to find that it was now firmly braced on the outside. Hope died within our hearts. What mercy could we expect at the hands of this desperado, since we had madded him by intruding into his lair?

How he had chanced to return and find us, — whether he had forgotten something that brought him back, or had lingered in the gorge on purpose to watch for enemies until he saw us enter his secret den,—we never knew.

No sooner did the prospect of starving to death present itself than we began to feel hungry, although it was yet two hours before dinner-time. At the top of our voices we shouted for assistance, hoping that some tourist might be passing, but only wasted our breath, for the gorge in which the cave was situated opened off from the more attractive cañon of the Platte, and was seldom frequented by visitors.

Huntgill himself, who remained much of the time near enough to hear our agonizing cries, deigned no response.

Three cruel days and hopeless nights dragged on, and then we gave up to despair. Pelegon became temporarily insane. By the dim light of a little opening in the cave I could see his eyes glare in their sockets like those of a wild

beast. He raved continually about Ozelia, and about the good name he could bring to her if Huntgill's testimony could once be taken.

My own thoughts and painful fancies were devoted to Augusta and the children, although poor Pelegon rapidly grew worse and required all the attention I could bestow.

About this time we captured a little screech-owl. I have never eaten anything that tasted so fine. I was convinced that the whole world would be infinitely more happy if it would confine itself to a diet of raw owl, without pepper or salt. It was my serious purpose, in case I should escape from that prison alive, to devote the remainder of my days to advocating owls for table use, and to breeding them for the market. How different we feel under different circumstances! Is it not true that our surroundings make us wholly what we are? If so, and if in some future life our surroundings shall be infinitely better than they are here, will it require any miracle to make us infinitely better than we are now?

I don't know.

The owl-meat made both of us serious and increased our wisdom, so that we reflected on our impending fate, and tried to make peace with our better selves, in order that they might not rise up in judgment against us on the last day. There is nothing like keeping on good terms with one's better self. It is the final arbiter of one's destiny.

"Let us trust in the Lord," said Pelegon.

"Yes, and keep our powder dry," I replied, as I opened a canister I had just discovered, filled with a coarse, gritty substance. When I had tasted of it, I was ready to shout for joy, for I knew it was the one thing I wanted above all others.

Luckily, I had a few matches left, and my plans for deliverance were soon laid. Scraping out the loose dirt from under one corner of the stone which shut us in, I embedded the canister as much as possible, then solidly packed the earth about it, having first connected it with a fuse made of my pocket-handkerchief, into which I had put just enough powder to carry a spark slowly along from end to end.

The end of the fuse having been lighted, we both retreated to a safe distance, and prayed fervently for success, when a terrific explosion occurred. Through smoke and dust we tumbled over each other, in our haste to see what had been wrought.

Who can tell our feelings as a great flood of light broke in upon us from the outer world.

The huge stone had been thrown from its pivot, and lay unbroken on its broad side. Oh, how blessed is light! When the universe first awoke in response to the divine command, "Let there be light," it could not have been any happier than we were now, and I doubt whether it felt any bigger. How it magnifies one to achieve a great thing!

As we clambered over the prostrate stone, our ears were greeted with the sound of groaning. At first, the light blinded our eyes, but as soon as we could see clearly we discovered that Huntgill was held fast to the ground, his right arm being crushed beneath the stone. Somehow, wickedness always gets overtaken at last.

It was pitiable to hear this hardened sinner plead. Bad as he was, I would have relieved him from pain had it been in my power. Justice may be better than men, but men are more tender.

As soon as Pelegon and I had drunk water from the creek, and eaten a few ripe berries to satisfy the keener

pangs of thirst and hunger, we turned our whole attention to the wretched prisoner.

"Where were you seventeen years ago last November?" I demanded of him without any preliminaries.

"I can't remember," said he. "Help me out of this."

"But you must remember," I replied, "or we will keep you here till you perish. Did you not at that time have something to do with a child which was not your own?"

"Yes—no, I did n't either, come to think."

"Be careful, now. We are not here for the purpose of being deceived. Your 'yes' came from what little innocence you have left, while 'no' was an after-thought, born of fear. Tell me, now, what you finally did with the child."

"I took him to a farm in Swampton, as the preacher advised."

"What preacher?"

"Don't know."

"Was there a note fastened to the child's clothing?"

"Yes."

"Anything else?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Money."

"How much?"

"A hundred dollars in gold; and if I had not been an honest man I should have kept it."

"Who wrote that note?"

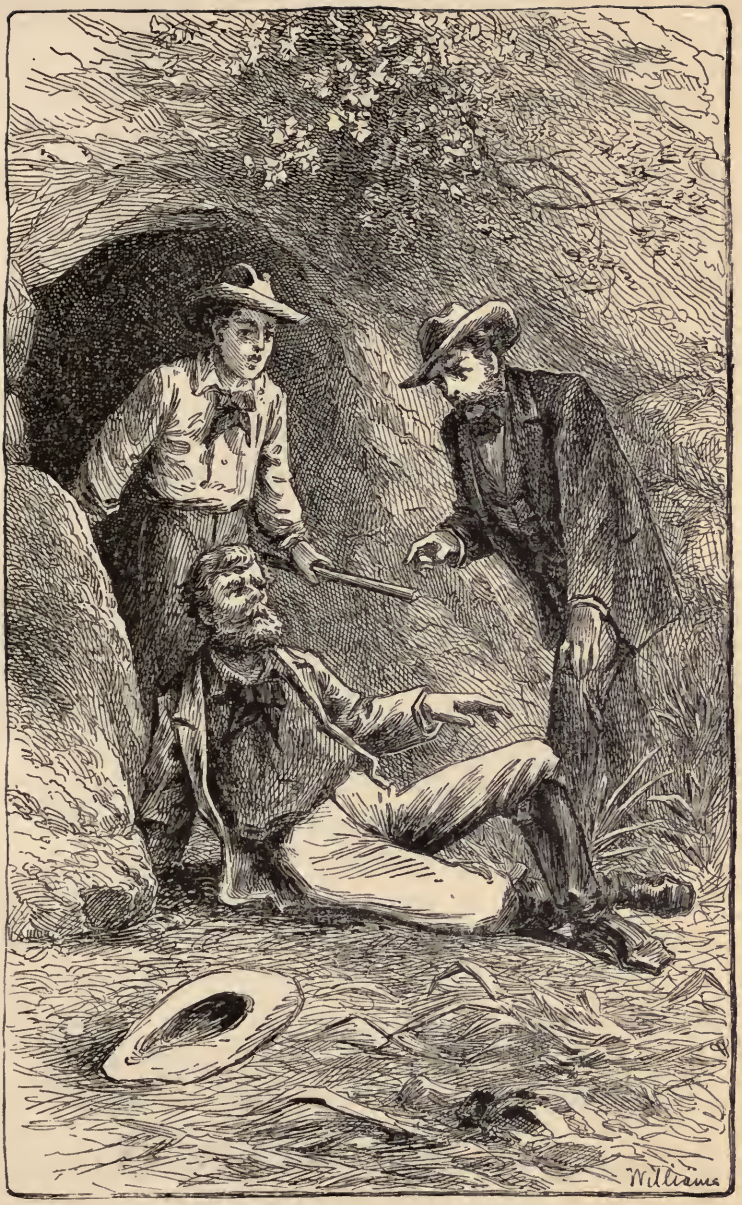
"Mrs. Solett."

"Who furnished her with its glaring falsehoods?"

"The whole thing was gotten up by her lawyer."

"What was his name?"

"Blackwit."



HUNTGILL CONFESSES.

"Is he living yet?"

"I suppose so."

"Where?"

"In Boston."

"For what purpose was the note written?"

"To keep the boy in the dark."

"Exactly!" exclaimed I; "but it has failed, at last, to accomplish its object, and the boy is now hunting up his parentage, with every prospect of success. You can help him in this matter; and if you reveal all that you know concerning it, villain that you are, you shall have your reward; but if you make the slightest attempt to deceive or to thwart me in my purpose, you shall answer with your life for the crimes that can be proved against you. Do you understand me?"

"Yes. Go on."

"Who were the parents of the child?"

"I forget."

"Have you told me all you know about him?"

"Yes. Now help me to get away from here."

"Do not be so impatient," I replied. "Your memory may grow stronger as your stomach grows weaker. Besides, it is possible to exist three or four days without eating or drinking, and in great mental distress; for this boy, on whose infancy you once laid your foul hands, and I, have just been trying the experiment. Remain where you are, therefore, till we can return to the city and notify a surgeon of your necessities, for it would be impossible for us to remove you. Certain officers of the law will also be requested to pay you a visit at the same time."

CHAPTER XI.

THE UNGUARDED HOUR.

A YOUTH whose name was Edwin Longworth, and who was about Pelegon's age, was in a fair way to become Pelegon's successful rival.

He lived in Boston, and had first met Ozelia when she was attending school near that city.

Unluckily for Pelegon, Edwin Longworth was a pure-minded, noble-hearted lad, much handsomer than Pelegon, more brilliant in gallantry, more graceful in manner, more sparkling and witty in conversation, and far more demonstrative in affection. Besides possessing all these advantages he was in high favor with Mr. and Mrs. Wordswell, was the child of wealthy and honorable parents, and could lay claim to having already won considerable esteem from Ozelia herself.

Considering all of these circumstances, it is not greatly surprising that Ozelia felt somewhat inclined to follow the course which the world seemed to have marked out for her. She was a pure-souled, high-minded girl, and her love for Pelegon was probably as deep as that of any ordinary earthly mortal; yet she was not perfect, nor was her heart infallible. Affection itself cannot always be trusted. Attachments, as well as leaves and angels, have their time to fall. There

are moments when love cannot be shaken; but there are other and different moments.

Edwin Longworth had become a constant visitor at Mr. Wordswell's. In spring-time he pretended to have great fondness for the meadow cranberries, which, having been left on the vines to freeze, were quite sweet and juicy. Then there were checkerberries and wild strawberries, followed by dewberries, blackberries, raspberries, low and high blueberries, whortleberries, and afterwards chestnuts, butternuts, and hickory nuts. When the season for these had passed, he came with fishing-tackle for two, and invited Ozelia to boat-rides on the Concord River. When winter set in he came again with two pairs of skates, and if the weather were unfavorable for out-door sports, he would set the chess-men, and challenge Ozelia to a contest in that royal game. On the whole, there was no time in the year when there was not some attraction to bring him to Swampton, although the chief attraction was always the young lady herself.

Mr. and Mrs. Wordswell designedly encouraged the city youth, for they knew he had excellent family connections, and gave promise of rising in the world to honorable distinction. Besides, they were anxious that Ozelia should form this new attachment, through which her interest in Pelegon would be lost, thus saving her from the objectionable name.

As we have said, Edwin Longworth had many of the qualities of a desirable suitor. The conditions for growing affection between him and Ozelia could scarcely have been more favorable. Side by side, and wholly unmolested by others, they roamed through glen and dale, o'er hill and stream.

At no other time did Ozelia have such marked success as

when she went berrying with Edwin. She did not know that he often slyly dropped whole handfuls of fruit into her basket, so that it might be filled as soon as his own. Neither did she mistrust that when he led the way over rough and stony places, where clambering was exceedingly difficult, under pretense of finding larger or riper berries beyond, his real motive was none other than to have some excuse for taking her by the hand in rendering her needed assistance. Nor was she aware how his manly heart throbbed in exquisite bliss when, in lifting her over the jagged stone wall, he would firmly enfold her graceful form in his strong arms.

Undoubtedly he loved the girl with that overpowering devotion of soul which is born of first experience. Each freshly-budding emotion of his young affectionate nature came as a glad surprise, revealing a new heaven on a new earth.

Ozelia probably would have loved him with the same irresistible instinct, but her heart, which was as yet steady and true, constantly reminded her that it was given to another.

Let no one suppose, however, that because her affection was preoccupied all danger was removed. There are historical instances of a fully-garrisoned fort having been taken without the firing of a gun.

Whenever man and woman find themselves frequently in each other's presence; whenever they begin to have experiences in common, either of joy or of sorrow; whenever, from whatever cause or motive, they go away from the multitude and sit down by themselves, while something like love comes and sits down between them, there is danger that they will become a necessity to each other's happiness.

One afternoon Edwin and Ozelia had been chestnutting, and were returning home with baskets well filled. It was

one of those perfect New England Indian Summer days, than which none are more delightful.

They could shorten their walk at least half a mile, by scaling the wall and going straight through the maple and pine woods. Edwin had set a snare there a few days before, and was now anxious to visit it, hoping he might have caught either a rabbit or a partridge.

Ozelia was quite willing to take this woodland route, and the two young friends were soon enveloped in the somber shade of the stately trees. Ere long they came to a place where a picnic party had been lately assembled, and where some of the young folks had built a pretty bower, and furnished it with a rustic seat. To this bower Edwin and Ozelia repaired, and seated themselves side by side, to enjoy the rest which was really grateful after their long ramble.

Let no one say there is nothing in scenery to influence human beings. A man's surroundings might make him a murderer or a saint. Here was a wild, lovely, romantic spot. Twilight and shadow danced together among the branches. There was just enough breeze to make the lordly pines discourse those eternal harmonies, to which no devotee could listen without being reminded of sacred themes. But neither Edwin nor Ozelia was in a mood to think of any other heaven than that which earth affords. While the soul of Edwin was keenly responsive to external influence, that of Ozelia was not dead to the touch of Nature's magic wand.

"I am tired enough to be perfectly happy in repose," said the innocent girl, as she leaned her head against the trunk of a tree.

"Perhaps there may be spiders in that rough bark," suggested Edwin, rather playfully. "I think you had better lean this way. There are no spiders on me."

So saying, he put his arm gently around her, and placed her head upon his shoulder. It was a very bold action, yet it was not resisted. Perhaps Ozelia was too weary to give it the necessary thought, and thus did not fully realize the impropriety of her passive consent. Perhaps she was so completely transformed by the atmosphere of the woods, or so overcome by the suddenness of her strange position, or so unaccountably influenced by the subtle power of the person with whom she was in contact, that she was not quite herself. Perhaps this particular hour had found in her a peculiar frailty which no other could have found. Perhaps she reasoned just a little, and came to the conclusion that, inasmuch as she was consciously good, and inasmuch as Edwin was also good, their mutual conduct could not be otherwise than good. Perhaps imagination played its delusive part, as it has been doing ever since old Time was born. One may take physical exercise or be engaged in hard mental labor until one can scarcely raise one's hand to one's head or judge what's what, and then imagination, having long rested, may jump into reason's throne, and rule without let or hindrance.

Ozelia's imagination was naturally vivid. How often had she seen horses and chariots in clouds, faces in rocks, and gigantic castles on the hill-tops. Now, with body and soul placed at their ease, while she gazed into the handsome face of Edwin Longworth, she imagined she saw a strong resemblance to her cherished friend in the Rocky Mountains. In another moment, it was Pelegon himself who sat beside her, supported her weight, pressed her hand, and softly whispered charming words. She was having an intoxicating, rapturous, waking dream, from which she had no desire to be aroused.

For the moment, she fancied that not only the face and form, but the very soul of Pelegon was now in her presence. She even congratulated herself that she had come at last to realize her chief desire, and at the same time had escaped the objectionable name to which her parents were so bitterly opposed. In reality, she was never more devoted to her absent lover than at this instant; but we must remember that temporarily she was not living in reality's world, but in that of ideality. Was it Edwin Longworth who held her hand in his? Oh, no! he had ceased to exist. It was her first and only love, the same that was never absent. Such is the wonderful reign of ideality.

Taking in account time and place, circumstance and condition, is it, after all, so very surprising that when Edwin Longworth asked, in trembling tones, "Dear Ozelia, do you love me?" she answered affirmatively, with more meaning than words could convey, and immediately received upon her rosy lips the rapturous kiss which had so long waited in an agony of suspense.

Edwin's ruling emotion could brook no delay. The other and great question was soon propounded:

"Dearest Ozelia, will you be mine?"

"O Edwin, you must give me time to think. I am so overwhelmed with new and delightful sensations, I am beside myself. Please wait till I am sufficiently calm to know my own heart, or whether I have a heart to give. In a few weeks I can decide."

This was a reasonable request, and we must blame Edwin for not complying with it. Nevertheless, our censure must be tempered with the knowledge that he was possessed of an exceedingly impulsive nature. Whenever a great purpose formed in his mind, it seemed as though he would

rather move heaven and earth at once, even with his own strength, than wait a moment for heaven and earth to be taken out of his way. "Strike while the iron is hot" was his motto; but to him every iron was hot the instant it was touched by his glowing soul. If you had respect for his temperament, you would not think of asking him to give to his judgment even three seconds of grace ere rushing headlong in any course on which he was bent. If to-day it were pennies, and to-morrow pounds, he would certainly be penny wise and pound foolish.

"No, Ozelia," he replied, "I shall die if I must wait for your answer. You are all the world to me, and I must live in that world at once, or perish forever."

The decisive word was soon spoken, and the engagement sealed with many kisses.

Thus imagination, with wings of love, had flown through the open gate of an unguarded hour, and carried a heart by storm.

CHAPTER XII.

LOU CRA'S CONUNDRUMS.

"WHAT! are you here? Have you been watching us, Lou Cra?"

Thus spoke blushing Ozelia, hastily withdrawing from Edwin's arm, when, on coming out from the shades of the forest where we left them, they stumbled upon the woman, concerning whose sanity there were differences of opinion.

"Will you buy my chestnuts?" asked Lou Cra, as though she had not heard her interrogator.

"Yes," replied Edwin, observing her well-filled basket. "But why do you sell them, my good woman?"

"If I were a squirrel I should not drink tea," was the reply.

"Oh, I see. You are poor. Ozelia, my dear, you seem to be acquainted with the lady. Does she live here in Swampton?"

"Yes," answered Ozelia, "and I like her ever so much, although"—and the girl whispered to Edwin—"they say there is something wrong with her mind."

"Poor creature!" exclaimed Edwin aloud; "and I will venture she is half famished. Here, take this, and provide yourself with all the luxuries of the season." So saying, Edwin handed her a crumpled mass of bills, of whose amount he himself had no definite idea.

"I am no beggar," returned the woman, exhibiting considerable spirit, as she refused the offer. "On the contrary, I could buy your whole family estate, and then have a surplus of cash sufficient to carry me through life."

"Ah! that puts the matter in a different light," answered Edwin, perceiving, as he supposed, the direction of her lunacy. "Then, I will not give you alms, but simply purchase your chestnuts," again offering her the money.

"Yes," said Lou Cra, "that is purely a mercantile transaction, and straight-forward business is not dishonorable, even among millionaires; but I cannot make change."

"The change is already made as near as need be," answered the young man. "Take my capital, and I will take your cargo."

"Six quarts of nuts at six cents a quart," replied Lou Cra. "Exactly thirty-six cents, or nothing."

"Humor her," whispered Ozelia, "and let us see if we cannot get at her history. She is in a good mood, now."

So the bargain was completed in accordance with the latest market quotations, and then Edwin said:

"You spoke of your large property, Mrs. Cra; would you mind telling us where the bulk of it is invested?"

"In the hands of one who has the advantage of epithets."

"How so?"

"There is no epithet so vile that it would not flatter her."

"Where does she live?"

"In the same city that you do; and I beg your pardon for the insult."

"What is her name?"

"At present, she is bearing the same name that my sainted mother bore, that was also mine in my happy childhood, and that my dear brother was proud to own."

"Is your brother living?"

"No; he was murdered by this same old hag that has the impudence to call herself Solett."

"Did your brother leave any children?"

At this question, a strange light gleamed in Lou Cra's eyes, and there was energy in her tones as she answered:

"I tell you that Pelegon Jinny was not his, and I warn you to stand from under, lest you be drowned in the torrent of angels' tears."

Ozelia shuddered.

Edwin could not but laugh at the woman's mysterious recital.

"And what have the angels to cry about?" he asked.

"Because of this desperately wicked earth, its intrigues, murders, lying, perjury, fraud, robbery, broken hearts, ruined homes, and burials of the dead and the living."

"Were you ever married?" asked Ozelia.

"No; few people are. But I followed the crowd. I jumped into the machine which gave me a new wardrobe, a new name, a new vision, and a new temper. Let me give you a conundrum: If you call a mule's ears hoofs, how many hoofs will he then have?"

"Six," answered Ozelia.

"Six, of course," answered Edwin.

"No," said Lou Cra; "he will still have but four, for calling a thing this or that does not make it this or that. You see, young man, you are not fit to marry, for you put names in the place of facts; but you cannot rid yourself of your mule's ears so easily!"

Edwin laughed heartily at this sally of wit, although directed against himself; but Ozelia was more thoughtful.

"Do you like conundrums?" inquired Lou Cra.

"Oh, yes!" said Edwin. "Let us have some nice ones."

"With morals at the end of them?"

"Certainly."

"First, then," said Lou Cra, "tell me where Homeopathy fails."

"When the patient dies," suggested Ozelia.

"When the doctor dies, for want of patients," thought Edwin.

"No," answered Lou Cra; "it is when the patient recovers and then undertakes to administer an infinitessimal fee to the physician."

"Good!" said Edwin. "Now for the moral."

"And mark it well," said Lou Cra. "Every business has a standard of its own, against which no other standard must be brought to bear. So with matrimony. It must stand or fall, governed by its own principles; and woe to him who would subject it to a false or commercial measurement."

"The moral is too deep," protested Edwin. "Now something easy."

"Why would it be wrong to increase a Swampton minister's salary?" was Lou Cra's next.

"He would feel like a bloated bondholder," replied Edwin.

"It would not be wrong," insisted Ozelia.

"Yes, it would," said Lou Cra; "for he must spend half his time in collecting what he already gets, and to increase his labors by sending him after more would be cruel. The moral of which is that if one person *offers* to another a love which is greater than he himself can deliver, it must prove fatal to the one who tries to collect it."

"That does n't hit me," whispered Edwin to his affianced.

Ozelia did not reply.

"Here is another," continued Lou Cra. "Once on a time, a man went into a hunter's tent, and seeing a keg, nearly filled with what he supposed was harmless black sand, he stood a lighted candle up in it. Lower and lower the candle burned, while nearer and nearer approached the flame to the innocent-looking material. One moment more, and it would be forever too late to prevent the fire from touching the contents of the keg. At that critical instant the man's wife entered, and immediately comprehended the situation. Question: What happened?"

Edwin answered, "The wife swiftly and dexterously placed both her hands under the lighted candle, and lifted it boldly from the keg, without allowing a single spark to fall upon the powder."

Ozelia answered, "I fear she was too late, and that a frightful explosion occurred, sending both husband and wife into eternity."

Lou Cra answered, "I told you that the man supposed he was putting the candle into black sand. *It was black sand*, and when the flame reached it there was simply a little spluttering, followed by darkness. Such are human hearts. The fire of love will not blow up the world, but rather will burn lower and lower till it reaches the real foundation — nothing but sand."

Ozelia was becoming thoroughly unhappy, and was only too glad that their walk had brought them nearly to her home.

"One more conundrum," said Lou Cra, "and then good-night. It is this: Should it be said, fifteen and seventeen *are* thirty-one, or fifteen and seventeen *is* thirty-one?"

"Fifteen and seventeen *are* thirty-one," said Edwin.

"Fifteen and seventeen *is* thirty-one," thought Ozelia.

"How young and innocent you both are!" answered Lou Cra. "You should know that the sum of fifteen and seventeen is *thirty-two*. You overlook an eternal fact, while centering your intellects upon nothing but a form of expression. Affection is such a fact, while what one person says to another is a matter of words, words, words. Mind now, I do not say, *Is* your love genuine? but *ah! ah!*"

The spell was broken. Ozelia was wretched. Edwin felt the chill of her solemnity. How speedily and effectually had they been brought down from the heights!

CHAPTER XIII.

PUT YOURSELF IN MY PLACE.

BEFORE leaving Denver I took Pelegon to the Opera-House, to see some stereopticon views. Unfortunately, our reserved seats placed us behind two ladies whose hats were so large that the view of the stage was almost entirely cut off. Likewise, they were rude enough to whisper incessantly, which so disturbed us that we had but little pleasure in the exhibition.

After the room was darkened, not having much else to do, I amused myself by quietly tying knots in some long ribbons belonging to the ladies in front, but which had been allowed to hang over the backs of their seats, so that they came within easy reach of my hands.

I drew the knots pretty hard, for I wanted the ladies to be as vexed, on removing their bonnets and discovering the mischief, as Pelegon and I had been in consequence of their ill manners. I believe in exact punishment. My conscience always pats me on the back when I legitimately afflict the unrighteous. To tie knots in a woman's bonnet-strings cannot be regarded as an excessive penalty for her having disregarded the proprieties which belong to a public gathering. Certainly, I did the best I could toward causing the face of Justice to beam with an approving smile.

Alackaday! When the lights were turned up I was appalled at the spectacle I had wrought. Not only were the delicate ribbons full of unsightly knots, but I had got them mixed, so that the two monstrous hats were tied firmly together.

When Pelegon observed what was done, his risibles were so affected that I was in mortal terror lest he should explode with laughter.

As it was, he succeeded in disturbing the ladies who owned the hats, and one of them abruptly turned her head so that she might bestow upon him a frown that would keep him quiet, in order that her whispering might not be interrupted.

Alackaday again! Her entire head-gear came off, except a little circular twist of natural hair, about the size of a Boston cracker. She grew thirty-five years older in less than five seconds.

The other woman had made the connections between natural and artificial a little stronger, so that she escaped with a damaged hat, and some painful hair-pulling.

While they were trying to ascertain what had struck them, a policeman came upon the scene, who, also, had an inquisitive turn of mind. In vain I tried to suppress Pelegon's laughter. The more my elbow fumbled with his ribs the more he snickered. I was almost sorry I had not eaten him when I had the chance.

By this time the ladies had discovered that their hats were tied together, and they looked daggers at Pelegon, but gave appealing looks to the policeman.

I knew what was coming, but how could I explain matters? When a man punishes a woman for her misbehavior, he is simply regarded as a coward if he attempts to justify

himself. There is no rule in the code of chivalry which can be used in his defense. In this particular, woman has more rights than man. She has the right to chastise him without being asked why she did it.

Yet I love woman. I love not that eminent New York physician who has just been arguing that, owing to her peculiar anatomical structure, she is incapacitated for exactness in the use of language. He claims that she finds it impossible to tell the truth, except on strong provocation,—as, for instance, when she afterwards answered *him.*

But, in a sense, the learned doctor is right; for if he refers to that part of woman's anatomy which puts on and takes off, it is proper to say that no reliance can be placed on it. It is conceived in falsehood, and maintained for purposes of deception.

The question is, would man be as truthful as he is if fashion were constantly urging him to practice deceit?

When Pelegon was arrested and lead out of the house, he stopped laughing. He was astonished. Accused of tying the ladies' heads together, he did not deny it. He would sooner have sacrificed his right arm than to get me into trouble. He was one who would do anything, even imperil his soul, for those he loved. There are a few such men and women left in the world. They will sin against themselves in trying not to sin against loyalty to friendship.

Up to that moment, I had not supposed Pelegon could tell a falsehood. I had ranked him with George Washington. But he differed from that gentleman in that he *could* tell a lie, but generally *would n't.*

Now, however, he made the statement that he was the one who fastened the hats together. I was too polite to accuse him publicly of falsehood, so I let it go that way.

"What is your name?" demanded the chief of police, before whom he was at once taken.

"Pelegon Jinny."

"That is fictitious," replied the officer. "Give us your true name."

"You must take that or nothing," answered the boy.

So the officer regarded him as a hard case, and locked him up in a felon's cell.

Next morning I paid his fine, and promised him a hundred dollars besides.

But the end was not yet. Although Justice licked her chops with satisfaction, not so the muscular husband of the lady whose head was dismantled.

Following Pelegon out of the court-room, he demanded of him that sort of "satisfaction" which belongs to border-ruffianism. This I could not allow. I would defend my young friend, at all hazards.

"Who are you?" demanded the irate husband of me.

"I am the protector of this innocent boy," said I, "and if you harm a hair of his head, you may have occasion to learn more of me."

I should not have shown so bold a front if I had known how anxious he was to engage in a fight.

He clinched me without another word.

Pelegon clinched him, and tried to tear him off.

Somebody tried to tear Pelegon off.

By this time, two or three drunken fellows — friends of the aggrieved husband — piled on to me.

Bystanders, who were anxious to see fair play, tried to take them away.

Finally, there were a dozen of us in a heap. Which one of the dozen I was I could not tell.

Four policemen tried to arrest us. They were on top at first, but had to take their turn with the rest of us in going to the bottom.

We covered a deal of ground before we were through.

The judge and all his *attachès* came out to see us, but they kept at a safe distance. His honor expressed himself aloud as being horrified at the spectacle; but when it was over, he told the clerk confidentially that he would not have missed seeing it for the best new hat in the city.

Some of us tried to cross the street. Others of us did n't want to cross. We effected a compromise. The horse-car track was blockaded. Drivers, conductors, and passengers had to stop and see us. They were glad of the opportunity. Some of them took a hand in trying to separate us. Individually, I was very well separated already.

A Texas steer had that morning made his escape from a slaughter-yard. He had been shot at by men, and pursued by boys, and bitten by dogs, until he was mad, and when that kind of a creature is mad, he is mad through and through.

In the short time he had been loose, he had crippled two women and three men, overturned five peanut and fruit stands, crashed through a French-plate window into a drug-store, gored the prescription clerk, and scattered his physic in all directions. So much done, he again took to the street, and, with eyes flashing fire, came bellowing toward the scene of conflict in which we were engaged.

Smelling blood in our midst, his ungovernable rage was newly excited, and, stiffening every muscle, he lowered his head, and plunged into us like Death's own battering-ram.

In an instant, we were resolved into our respective individualities, and ran with all our might in ever so many directions, according to our own sweet will.

No one but a policeman was seriously damaged by the beast, and he was eventually repaired by a medical seamstress.

I have not seen that husband since.

Never again will I meddle with a woman's top-knot.

Now, I want to ask the indulgent reader to put himself in my place. How could I have done differently? Circumstances forced everything on after the first innocent blunder of working at two hats where I thought there was but one.

I did not want to fight. I hate fighting. It is ungentlemanly, undignified, brutal, and wicked.

I am glad the steer came along when he did. Pelegon and I both said, as we spent the night rubbing each other with arnica, that we were only sorry he had not come sooner.

CHAPTER XIV.

DOGGIE DARLING.

HAVING seen Huntgill safely incarcerated, and having appointed an agent to look after Pelegon's interests, we left Denver in a Pullman palace-car for our long journey homeward.

One sees much human nature on the rail. In the car we occupied there was a little pug-dog going to Boston, and he had taken the precaution to provide himself with an elegantly-dressed woman for his constant attendant. Although she was worth an independent fortune, she showed her beautiful humility by condescending to be an obedient and faithful servant to his little dogship.

We learned that she belonged to a very aristocratic family, her parents being proud, above reproach, and haughty beyond suspicion. Had they been told at her birth that she was destined to become a *servant* in her mature years, they would have put her away under some little bridge, in order to shield their fair escutcheon from such disgrace.

Yet the woman herself magnified her office for the sake of the dog. She had more regard for his feelings than to belittle the honorable service to which he was entitled. She called him her King. I knew then what irresistible influence the kings of old had exercised over their subjects. I could

understand now how the people were willing to be butchered by companies, battalions, and corps in order that the kings might live.

She fed him with spring chicken, carefully boned, and wiped his delicate lips with a soft napkin. Every two minutes she fondly kissed him, hugging him to her faithful bosom between times.

If I could have had my choice of two evils, I would have chosen to be him instead of her. He was evidently having his good things in this world.

In the course of the day it occurred to his adorer that he needed a bath. He had not had one for twelve hours. Some of the passengers cruelly objected to its being administered in their presence. The conductor was appealed to. He was made of that stern stuff of which warriors are produced. Without manifesting a quiver of emotion, he told the fine woman it would be necessary for her to take her bath-tub and dog into the smoking-car. She went.

Meeting a brakeman, he said: "Madame, this is the smoking-car."

"I know it," said she.

As she entered the curling clouds of smoke, two or three gentlemen arose, and politely said: "Madame, this is the smoking-car."

"I should judge so," she replied.

The only vacant seat was beside a fat German, who was vigorously engaged drawing tobacco fumes from a large, handsome, meerschaum pipe. "Dis ish de schmoking-car," he remarked, as she sat down.

"It is an outrage on decency!" exclaimed the woman.

"Ish de schmoke of goot dobarker some offensive to you already, aint it?" he said.

"Yes; I can't bear it," replied the fair one, snappishly.

"I tought zo," answered Hans. "Some people ish joost dot vay," he continued, as he cast a glance at the dog before enveloping it in a cloud of suffocating smoke.

"No man that is a man will smoke in the presence of a lady," snarled the intruder.

"I knows it. Und I neffer doos dot ting, nohow already."

"Do you understand me, sir? I say I cannot bear smoke!"

"Ya! ya! You schpeaks wery goot Anglish. I oondersthands you all de dime already. I bay sexteen tollar for dis bootiful meerschaum, an' I must schmoke pooty much to get him nicely colored before I comes to Chicago already."

Another wreath of smoke sent the poor dog into a fit of sneezing.

The woman was now exasperated beyond measure. "I tell you," said she, "I can't stand it. I abominate a nasty pipe above all things in the world!"

So saying, she clutched the precious meerschaum and hurled it through the open window.

The German was astonished.

Thrusting his head out, he endeavored to give his treasure a farewell look, but it was lost to sight in the thick dust of the madly-rushing train.

Then he looked at the woman. Everybody in the car trembled for her. But he simply smiled. He winked to his fellow passengers, and smiled again.

"Dat ish all right!" said he, at last. "I neffer schqueel."

Then he leaned back, and for two minutes gave himself up to brain-racking thought.

Suddenly he aroused. Silence was broken.

"I can't bear it!" he broke out, in tones that attracted

everybody's attention. "I has been trying to bear it zo long already; but it aint no use—I can't bear it! I can't bear it!"

"Can't bear what?" inquired the woman, pausing in her employment of bathing King.

"Dot ish joost it," answered the German. "I abominate a leetle, nasty dog above all de tings in de world," and no sooner were the words spoken than he seized the poor pug by the tail, and threw him out of the window.

Then there was a scene.

Away went the woman through the train, screaming hysterically, until, meeting the railroad conductor, she had just enough strength to tell him that her darling was out of the window, when he, supposing she had lost her child, jerked the bell-rope, had the train stopped, and sent a man ahead to flag the way, and another to the rear to signal danger.

This done, we were pushed back with considerable speed, while all the railroad employees carefully watched the shallow ditch on both sides of the track for the mangled remains of a human infant.

We must have gone back three or four miles before the conductor learned the true state of affairs. He was mad.

He knew he would fail to get through on time, and possibly would lose his position.

Once more the engine was set forward, and after a moment's delay, we were ready to advance.

But in that moment of delay something occurred which filled the soul of our German traveler with inexpressible joy. He recovered his pipe. You should have seen his countenance beam as he held the prize aloft and jumped aboard the train just as it was starting forward.

"And is n't my King found?" gasped the woman in grief, suddenly recovering from a swoon.

Alackaday! The bath of King was never finished. What finally became of his faithful companion, we have not learned.

Before Chicago was reached, the meerschaum was richly colored.

Pelegon declared that he had no idea, while living in Swampton, what a wonderful world this is.

CHAPTER XV.

A LAWYER'S REMINISCENCES.

ON returning to Boston, I ascertained that the grand jury had found two indictments against Lawyer Blackwit, and that he was then incarcerated, awaiting a trial which would be certain to result in his being sentenced to imprisonment for life. Having obtained permission to visit him, the conversation which followed is here recorded.

"I am told," said I, "that the evidence which will be brought against you is so strong and conclusive that you can have no reasonable hope of acquittal, either on the charge of forgery or perjury."

"I have ceased to hope," replied Blackwit; "and as my friends have all deserted me, and I am getting too old to make new ones, perhaps I may as well be in prison as anywhere, during my remaining days."

"There is one matter with which you have been connected," I remarked, "which I intend to fully investigate."

"Will the investigation be tedious and embarrassing to me?" asked the lawyer.

"I expect it will."

"Then suppose I enter into an agreement with you."

"What have you to propose?" I inquired.

"I will agree," said Blackwit, "to tell you all I know

about the case, whatever it may be, on condition that you will promise never to bring any legal process against me. Unless you accept these terms, you must find out what you wish to know the best way you can."

I looked at the gray hair and wrinkled brow of the old man, who was already so firmly held by the grappling-hooks of the law that there was no probability of his escape, and then answered:

"Very well, sir. Make a clean breast of it and I will leave your punishment with God rather than man."

"Proceed," said Blackwit, manifesting that stoical resignation born of despair.

"You will now tell me," said I, "what you know, and all that you know, concerning a certain child, about two years of age, who was left at the house of John Hotchkick, seventeen years ago last November."

"Aha!" exclaimed the lawyer, "I expected that was the subject."

"And also," I continued, "I want a clear explanation of this note, which was pinned to the child's clothing," taking the time-worn paper from my pocket and holding it before the eyes of Blackwit.

"That infernal Hotchkick lied to me!" vociferated the prisoner, examining the writing, while I still held it in my own hand. "He told me the mice had 'chawed it up.'"

"Who wrote it?" I asked.

"A woman who was my client, and who pretended to be my friend, but whom I now hate with all the hatred of perdition. If I had not followed her diabolical counsel I should not be here to-day."

"Another instance of Adam charging the whole wrong to Eve," I remarked.

"Yes; and I know as well as anybody that it looks cowardly; but if any one can come within the range of what that woman calls her magnetic influence, and not be struck by moral lightning, he is a better non-conductor than I am, that's all. Nature furnishes a similar creature in the electric fish, which, if you are foolish enough to grasp it, will discharge a shock of electricity sufficient to so paralyze your hand that you cannot remove it. Shock after shock will then be sent until you are a dead man. There are a few just such women in the world. Once lay your hand upon them, and if ever you get away alive it will be only by tearing yourself all to pieces."

"What is the name of the person with whom you have been so unhappily associated?" inquired I.

"She is called Madame Solett."

"What was her motive in writing this note?"

"Well, the case in brief, if you must know, is simply this: Some twenty years ago, the woman of whom I speak was not such an extraordinary person as she has since become. She followed the business of mesmerizing people, and was quite successful with a certain class. If she told them the moon was made of cheese, she could not only make them see the skippers it contained, but would cause them to take cognizance of its savory odor, as they raised their noses and sniffed the air. If I may be permitted to use a classical illustration, she so completely controlled her subjects that they were as yielding to her purposes as mud under a duck's foot. If she wanted a man to get sick, or even to die, in her presence, she was able to accomplish her design without exercising any violence whatever.

"At one time an old bachelor made her acquaintance, and being an agreeable sort of fellow, and possessed of a large

fortune, she kept him company for about a year. She was anxious to have him marry her, but as he was not a perfect 'subject,' she failed in this to accomplish her will.

"At last he died, and it was a pretty mysterious taking off, I assure you. Then came his sister, who, being the only heir, was legally entitled to the entire property. Meanwhile Madame Solett set up the claim that she was the widow of the deceased millionaire, appointed me her attorney, and instructed me to furnish the proof. I had some trouble in finding a minister who would make out a marriage certificate; but after a while I came across a person whose price was not extravagant,—his purse and his conscience both being rather short,—and he not only furnished the document I wanted, but assisted me in getting witnesses to the marriage ceremony. These witnesses were conscientious enough, for it is true they had attended a marriage at one time, but having forgotten the names of the parties, the clergyman had only to tell them that it was this marriage of Solett they had seen, and they believed it, simply because he told them so, and then swore to it without equivocation or mental reservation."

"What was the minister's name?" I asked.

"Drowthers."

"Of Swampton?"

"Yes."

"Ah! it is well that he is dead, for I would expose him without mercy."

"You would have found that work already done," answered Blackwit, "for one Lou Cra was on his track about the time he was killed, and she would have had him turned up to the light in a few days more, if merciful death had not stepped in and saved him."

"What is the history of Lou Cra?" inquired I.

"She is that sister I spoke of, and as Mr. Solett had no other relative at the time of his decease, she was justly entitled to his property."

"Did she know all the facts concerning your villainy?"

"She knew nothing, as courts count knowledge; but if her instinctive convictions could have been taken for evidence, it would have gone hard with us.

"I pitied her a little, for in former days she was the bright, central star of society's very *élite*. When the great blow came, it so prostrated her intellect that for many years she suffered all the horrible evils which a distorted imagination could conjure up."

"Go on with the recital," demanded I, with impatience, as Blackwit paused. "You made use of the marriage certificate and witnesses which Drowthers provided. What then?"

"Well, I thought it advisable, since there was so much property in issue, to strengthen my case with still further and stronger evidence; so I advised my client that she ought not to appear in court without a babe in her motherly arms, and told her that if one could possibly be procured, bearing some resemblance to the deceased man, all we should then require would be a nurse to swear that she had taken care of the infant ever since it was born to Mrs. Solett, and our case would be perfect.

"To get just the right kind of child without having it immediately traced up and claimed was an undertaking requiring both courage and ingenuity. However, we employed a fellow by the name of Huntgill, who was already in the service of my client, and he did the work much more satisfactorily than we had anticipated.

"Going into Ohio, he happened to see just the child he wanted, having eyes, nose, and mouth closely corresponding to those of the deceased. He found out that the child with its mother was to go on a stage journey from Upton to Montville.

"On the day they started, he hired a team, and kept them well in view until night came on. His theory was that, as the coach would not arrive at Montville till midnight, the woman would fall asleep on the way. He knew that the stage would stop at a certain wayside inn some time in the night, for the purpose of changing horses. Well, no sooner had they stopped than he was on the alert to accomplish his purpose. With cat-like tread he crept up in the dark, opened the stage door, and discovered, just as he had hoped, that the mother was lost in sleep, while the child peacefully slumbered on the seat beside her. It was but the work of a moment to seize the little one, and bear it away.

"Fortunately for our case, the woman, on discovering her loss, jumped out of the stage and went raving mad before any one could be informed of the circumstances; and thus people generally supposed that she herself had insanely disposed of her own offspring, and consequently nobody ever discovered the right clew. Shortly, she died.

"Our plot succeeded finely. The trial ended, and the decision was in favor of my client.

"Then, as Madame Solett had no desire to keep the child, she again called on Huntgill to dispose of it.

"He took it to New York city, and left it in a basket at somebody's door, where it remained a few months, when we learned that the father of the child had taken rooms on the same street; and, being afraid that he would recognize it and make trouble, we once more engaged Huntgill to kidnap the little one, and remove it to some backwoods place, to which no interested party would be likely to come.

"Once more we invited Parson Drowthers to our confidence—for we wanted to put the child where he could keep watch to see that it was not discovered—and he recommended one of his parishioners, Hotchkick by name. And I think if the whole world had been hunted over, we could not have found a man who would be more likely to keep a child thoroughly down than this same miserable dog of a Hotchkick.

"In order to heap additional degradation on the motherless boy, Madame Solett named him Pelegon Jinny, and represented, as you will discover by the note, that he was the illegitimate offspring of the worst possible parents.

"Having sent a hundred dollars and threatened dire vengeance on Huntgill if the money was not deposited with the child, everything was satisfactorily done, and Madame Solett, after paying me a very liberal fee, entered into the enjoyment of her vast estate, since which time she has increased it by ways that are somewhat crooked and, if I mistake not, slightly dark."

"Who was the father of the child," I demanded.

"Herford Leslie."

"The murdered school-master?"

"Yes."

"And how did he happen to be at Hotchkick's?"

"That was Lou Cra's doing.

"She seemed to know everything, from beginning to end. Having gotten the school-master into her confidence, she managed to convince him that the boy belonged to him; and just as he was about to tell him so and take him away, the murder occurred."

Blackwit could tell no more.

CHAPTER XVI.

LIFE'S CHANGES.

SHORTLY after the events related in the preceding chapter, Lou Cra was engaged in steeping the last bit of tea in her possession. Too proud to beg, she was actually perishing of slow starvation. In a wretched attic, for which the rent was a mere trifle, she passed her miserable days and sleepless nights. No one came to visit her, or seemed to care whether she lived or died.

The tea was ready, and Lou Cra, with trembling hand, poured it into a cracked cup which stood upon an empty barrel covered with a rough board.

She tasted the tea. It was not good. Her mind wandered back to the long ago. "Topsy!" she called, half delirious, "bring the cream and sugar. Ah! that's right. Now, Topsy, a bit of tender steak, well done, and then some rich, toothsome dessert. Very well. O Topsy, go into the parlor, and see that the velvet furniture is dusted, and the lace curtains hang gracefully, for I expect fashionable calls this afternoon."

The dream was interrupted. There came a real knock on the tangible door of her actual attic, and, a moment later, a veritable human being stood in her presence.

"Do my eyes deceive me?" cried Lou Cra; "or is this surely Master Berkeley? I am so glad to see you, for you

were always good to the ones that nobody else was good to. Take my seat. Don't mind my standing, for it rests my rheumatism."

I refused the solitary chair, and noticing that Lou Cra was somewhat embarrassed because she could not offer better accommodations, began at once on the business which had brought me.

"Mrs. Cracraft," said I,—the woman's face became deeply suffused,—"I have taken the liberty to act as your attorney. Many years ago, your only brother died, leaving a fortune to which you, as the only heir, were entitled."

"Yes," faltered the woman.

"And the property was stolen."

"Yes."

"Well, to condense the matter into few words," said I, "Mrs. Solett, so-called, has been made to acknowledge her crime, and every arrangement has been completed for immediately transferring to you the entire amount of which you were defrauded."

"Topsy," cried Lou Cra, more than half believing that she was still in the beautiful home she had once occupied, "have my carriage ordered at once, as urgent business calls me to the city."

The poor woman was more than half in a sphere not of earth, for the restoration of her rights had come too late, and the sudden news almost completely overpowered her shattered nerves, weary heart, and exhausted brain.

* * * * * * * *

A month passed. Lou Cra was dead, and her will was produced.

All her estate was given to Charles Leslie, formerly known as Pelegon Jinny.

Could this expression of her purpose be set aside? No; the will was made during a lucid interval, and in the presence of a sufficient number of unimpeachable witnesses.

What could Mrs. Wordswell require more? The schoolmaster's son had a noble parentage, an honorable name, an enviable fortune, and, what is worth more than all else, richest qualities of mind and heart.

But, alas! Ozelia Wordswell was engaged to Edwin Longworth.

CHAPTER XVII.

IGNIS FATUUS EMOTIONS.

OZELIA WORDSWELL saw her wedding *trousseau* finished, and the day arrived when she was to be married. Yet she was in no jubilant mood. In fact, nothing reconciled her to the step she was about to take, except that she was doing something which would please her parents, and which she conceived to be in the line of her duty. That she was wronging love, and grossly violating the claims of womanly nature, she did not allow herself to believe.

After all, it is no easy task to banish an ideal which has been one's inspiration, life, and joy, throughout the gladsome years of youth. This is what Ozelia Wordswell was now trying to accomplish.

A slave was once required by his master to put to death an old pet dog that had been the slave's constant and most cherished companion. The animal looked upon the weapon which was to take his life, and appeared to plead for mercy at the hands of the unwilling executioner. The club fell heavily, but, instead of killing the creature outright, it seemed to endow him with greater life. Blow after blow was given in quick succession by the obedient servant, but his brute companion only cried in ever-increasing agony, till, at last, the grief-stricken man, seeing how vain were all

his efforts, and being unable to witness the terrible wrong he had inflicted on the innocent creature of his love, turned upon himself and sought relief by taking his own life.

Thus there are those who have thought to crucify genuine affection because they were slaves to some external authority, and how woful have been the consequences!

Ozelia Wordswell was thoroughly conscientious. She might have erred in judgment, but in moral intention no angel of heaven could discover a single error. She sincerely believed that, although her heart could not accompany her hand, she was nevertheless under the most binding obligations to marry Edwin Longworth. Did not duty impose the sacrifice of her own feelings? Duty to herself, because she had given Edwin the promise he had asked? Duty to him, because he had said so earnestly that he could not live unless she would be his darling wife? Duty to her parents, because they would not be reconciled to her own free choice; and duty to society, because of its demand that the judgment of those who gossip shall be respected?

She said to herself: "I will try to make the best of my cruel destiny. I will try to love him whom this day I am to marry."

This little word "try" is monstrously abused whenever employed in such connection. If the Almighty were driven to the necessity of trying to love us, it were better that we had never been born.

Everybody has a modicum of egotism. In this respect even Ozelia Wordswell was not an exception. Had it been otherwise, she might have surmised that perhaps, after all, Edwin Longworth might possibly manage, some way or other, to live without her. Such a possibility did not enter her mind.

Now let us visit the young man himself, and ascertain of what stuff he is woven. It was the morning of the day appointed for his wedding. He was pacing back and forth in his room, his mind in a very perturbed condition. He and his cousin Henry were fellow-lodgers in a fashionable hotel, and his cousin had been chosen to act as groomsman at the nuptial ceremony.

"Come, come!" he said to Edwin. "Cheer up! This is no time for despondency. What is the matter, old boy? See here, now; you have been gazing at the carpet for the last hour, and it is n't a good day for carpets, either. I declare to Cupid, if you don't forthwith change your mood, and brighten up and act as you ought to, I will go out there and marry that pretty girl, myself!"

Edwin Longworth ceased walking, and looking his cousin full in the face, said, with solemn emphasis:

"Henry, if you would marry her, I should be the happiest man on earth."

"What!"

"I know it is outrageous for me to say it, but let me confide in you. I am a worthless, fickle, good-for-nothing creature. There is absolutely nothing to me but my emotions, and they rule without check, because every check is of itself emotional.

"I thought I loved Ozelia Wordswell with love so great that the world could not begin to hold it. I not only told her so, but, day after day, assured her, what I then really felt, that I could n't and would n't exist without her. But alas! it proved to be nothing but that of which Schiller says: 'Oh, love! the beautiful and brief.'

"Now, I need not tell you of that young lady who recently came here on a visit, from New York, took rooms at our

hotel, and remained an entire week. Do you not remember her?"

"What was her name?" asked Henry.

"Why, Ella Marshall."

"Do you mean the lady you went riding with so often?"

"Certainly; and you yourself took her to the opera."

"Ah! now that you speak of the opera my recollection begins to wake up. Did she wear embroidery, drapery, ruffling, puffing, pleating, braiding, tatting,—"

"Hold, Henry! are you crazy? How do I know about all these fol-de-rols? I have not made a business of studying women's elaborate wardrobe, as you seem to have done."

"But I want to identify the woman," insisted Henry. "Did she have on ribbons, ruffs, cuffs, laces, velvets, whalebones, bands, tuck-ups?"

"Certainly she did," replied Edwin, impatiently. "Why don't you say that you know her, and have done with it?"

"Because," answered Henry, "I would not wish to make so rash a statement without being certain we both have reference to the same person. I ask you seriously, did the woman of whom you speak wear a scarf, basque, sash—"

"I tell you, Henry, I won't listen to another word," cried Edwin, greatly exasperated.

"Yes, you will," answered Henry, laughing. "I *do* know Ella Marshall. There now, you have listened to that! Let us make up and be friends, for I never in all my life loved you as I am loving you at this minute. Pray what can I do for you?"

"I want a little advice," meekly responded Edwin. "In the short seven days during which Ella Marshall remained in this city my heart was turned inside out. In spite of every effort, my impulsiveness or unconquerable fickleness

went through all my previous affections like a raging fire. The consequence was I loved Ella Marshall as I never had and never could love anybody else in the world; and now, traitorous and wicked as I know I am, I cannot help it, I find myself longing for the heart and hand of beautiful Ella."

"I fear," said Henry, "you are one of Dryden's witnesses: 'All love may be expelled by other love, as poisons are by poisons.'"

"It is not so," replied Edwin. "Nothing could ever drive out the love I experience for Ella Marshall."

"Probably not."

"Probably not, you say, but I can detect a sarcasm in your speech."

"No, Edwin, I mean just what I affirm. Nothing can drive out your love for Ella Marshall. Why? Because it will go out itself. 'Love is never lasting which flames before it burns.'"

"I tell you, Henry, I would die for her."

"Indeed! Does she love you in return?"

"Very likely; although she has not declared it, for the simple reason that I had no right to propose to her while engaged to the other lady, whom I must marry this very day as a matter of honor."

"Why do you not state the whole truth to Ozelia Wordswell, and ask her to release you from your painful obligation?"

"For the reason that it would break her heart, and probably hasten her death. She loves me with that all-absorbing intensity which it would be perilous to molest. You see now what a wretched situation I am in. What am I to do?"

"Really," replied Henry, "there is nothing that can be

advised except for you to carry out the programme and marry Miss Wordswell with as good grace as possible."

"Exactly; but what a sacrifice! To give up Ella Marshall requires more heroism than to fall on the field of battle. Ella Marshall! Oh, Ella! and I must tear you from my heart of hearts, and then this day present that heart, all wounded and bleeding, at the altar of matrimony! Think of it! Is it not dreadful?"

"It certainly is," answered his cousin, "but stern duty must be respected, and I rejoice that you have the courage to follow wherever it may lead."

CHAPTER XVIII.

JUSTICE AT LAST.

HAVING proved that the murdered school-master was Charles Leslie's father, I found witnesses who could testify that they had heard John Hotchkick say that he would kill any man who should claim Pelegon and attempt to take him away.

Hotchkick being brought face to face with this fact, emphatically denied that he had any knowledge or suspicion that Herford Leslie was related to the boy. Notwithstanding this protest I had him arrested, charged with murder, and his house searched for evidences.

To my great surprise, a paper was found, addressed to myself, which proved conclusively that Herford Leslie had identified his son, and that his own life was jeopardized in consequence.

Fearing that the worst might happen, he had undertaken to leave a record with me, but which, for a reason we may too vividly surmise, he did not live to finish.

The record, so far as it goes, is as follows:

"DEAR BERKELEY: Do you remember your old friend, Herford Leslie, who used frequently to run into the office of the *Farmer's Guide* in the days of its glory? For a year, at least, I enjoyed your friendship, yet never told you my

MRS. LESLIE SEARCHING FOR HER CHILD.

strange history, nor did you know what great grief weighed upon my heart.

"I had lost a living son.

"To-day I am convinced that I am in his presence.

"I have not yet revealed this to him, as I must avoid madding his unprincipled guardian until the time comes that we can make good our escape.

"I fear that Hotchkick already suspects my purpose, for he is keeping a close watch on all my actions.

"Therefore, dear friend, permit me to make a note of the great sorrow of my life, and consign it to your kindly charge.

"I married a woman of transcendent quality.

"Our only child, a bright, beautiful boy, full of promise, had been blessed with two joyful summers of existence; and if any being was ever constantly worshiped, that being was little Charlie. Whatever we might apparently have been living for, or for whatever we might seem to pray, our babe was the very inspiration of all our life, and prayer.

"It was in the month of August, when important business made it necessary for me to leave my family. Having to be away from them several weeks, my wife concluded to take the child, and visit her parents, staying with them during my detention from home.

"She never reached her destination. After many days, they found her wandering through the fields without a purpose, without consciousness, and starving.

"Having some letters in her possession, she was easily identified, brought home, and I was sent for without delay. On my arrival, I was horror-stricken at her appearance. Judge of my surprise and grief when, instead of recognizing me, she shrank from my presence, and seemed frightened at

my approach. I spoke and pleaded in the old endearing way to which she was accustomed, but all that I could do or say availed nothing.

"Where was the baby boy? No one knew. Oh, how my heart was wrung with agony as I pictured the horrible death which he had probably suffered. I employed men to search through the country in every direction, but my precious darling they could not find, either dead or alive, and all that could be learned was that the mother, with her babe, had taken the stage at Upton, paid her fare to Montville, and that when the stage arrived there at midnight, and the driver called out the name of the place, and opened the stage door to assist his passenger to alight, he was greatly nonplused at finding the coach empty. He had stopped two or three times during the journey, but had not known of his passenger's departure. As it was a dark, cloudy night, he concluded that the woman must have decided to stop at the wayside inn while the horses were changed, and had done so unobserved by him. So the driver dismissed the subject without further thought.

"From that time on, I could do nothing but travel about the country making inquiries for my lost boy. There were many rumors afloat concerning lost children, and I was led quite a busy life, journeying here and there to examine into cases which, at the last, could furnish me no satisfaction.

"In due time, by mere accident, it seemed, I met Louisa Cracraft—otherwise known as Lou Cra—and somehow, I do not know how it came about, I was led to tell her the burden of my soul.

"She persuaded me to come to Swampton, secure the school here, and make the acquaintance of a certain boy, who, as she said, somewhat resembled me in looks.

"So I thought when I first met him in the home of John Hotchkick.

"Lou Cra urged me to claim him at once. But how could I? True, I felt in my heart that he was mine. But where was the proof? It would have availed me nothing to produce the predictions of this woman whom the world was laughing at. To have done so would have wronged the child, rather than to have benefited him.

"However, the sympathy of my fatherly soul went out to him, and, before I knew it, he had taken possession of the great vacancy in my affections. In trying to make him happy, I found what I had supposed was hopelessly lost—my own happiness. It became my constant delight to study his welfare, encourage his every effort, and watch his progress.

"But this day all doubt is forever set aside. A letter was placed in my hands by an entire stranger—by the way, that letter has mysteriously disappeared, and I fear it has fallen into the hands of Hotchkick. Yes, here he comes with it."

Herford Leslie had written his last word. The abrupt ending was painfully significant. It was more; for, with other circumstantial evidence which I was able to gather, it resulted in the conviction of John Hotchkick for murder in the first degree, and in his final confession of the crime.

CHAPTER XIX.

A GRAND CONCLUSION.

REVEREND PAUL MURRAY came to take the place of Parson Drowthers. An elegant church was reared, and the parish experienced a healthful revival of religion. The new minister was the delight of both old and young, being a perfect treasury of goodness, a full mine of thought, and a whole world of practical wisdom combined. He taught that spirit is more than language, character than profession, and life than creed, while his own good works were what some one has described as "visible rhetoric."

Mr. Wordswell's parlors had been decorated with flowers, the bridal altar had been prepared. Edwin Longworth and Ozelia, in an adjoining room, stood side by side, expecting every moment to be summoned to appear before the Rev. Paul Murray, to receive the rite which should make them man and wife.

The appointed time having fully arrived, the guests were impatient for bride and groom to present themselves.

Some one knocked at the outside door, and the announcement was made that a stranger was there who desired to see the clergyman on important business. Mr. Murray answered the call, and closed the door behind him.

"What keeps him so long?" was the anxious inquiry which soon began to arise in every breast.

Ten minutes,—it seemed an age,—and then he returned. A keen observer might have discovered a serious, troubled expression upon his countenance, which had not been there when he left the room. However, no one had the boldness to question him, nor was there any opportunity; for he immediately announced that all was now in readiness for the ceremony. Bride and groom were apprised of the fact, and in a moment more they and the attendants took their proper places around the altar. The groom was grand in appearance, although exquisitely modest, while the bride:

> "Oh! She has a beauty which might ensnare
> A conqueror's soul, and make him leave his crown
> At random, to be scuffled for by slaves."

> "Mark her majestic fabric: she 's a temple
> Sacred by birth, and built by hands divine;
> Her soul 's the Deity that lodges there;
> Nor is the pile unworthy of the God."

In and of herself Ozelia was always superior to her adornments. Nevertheless, she was feeling very sad on this impressive occasion. Her smile was shaded with a touch of something,—something which made it all the more fascinating to others, although to her it meant anxiety and a troubled spirit.

"Usually," said the clergyman, who was now standing directly in front of the bridal pair, "marriage ceremonies are quite too brief. The consequences which they involve are so momentous, that the most deliberate consideration should characterize their every detail.

"Feeling a great responsibility resting upon myself as the officiating clergyman, you must pardon me for not wishing to celebrate your marriage until I have prayerfully and earnestly given you all the warning and admonition which the good Father has placed in my heart.

"First, I call upon you to realize that marriage does not exist in any formulary, ordinance, or sacrament; that it cannot be made or conferred by any decision of State or Church; that no minister of the Gospel has power to create it, and that where pure and undivided love does not exist on either side, the marriage ceremony is nothing but a wicked farce, out of which there grows ofttimes a ghastly record of sin and crime.

"You must remember that no minister is able to marry one person to another, for all that he can possibly do is to declare a marriage which he believes exists. In case he does not so believe, how can he justify his conscience in declaring it? Therefore it is my solemn duty, first, to explain the nature of conjugal relationship, and then to appeal to both of you to answer before God and man whether your hearts are already possessed by each other and so closely and firmly united that no intruder can ever come between.

"With perfect truthfulness of love there must always be perfect love of truth. Hence, in every connubial union, truth should be regarded as the most essential uniting medium. This should be so for truth's dear sake, and for the protection of him who is called to officiate, that he may not be guilty of doing false work, and for the protection also of society, that it may not be deceived as to what constitutes real marriage; but more especially for the protection and permanent happiness of both bride and groom.

"I implore you, therefore, that you do not offer at this matrimonial altar one jot or tittle more than is in you to bestow. If either of you experience any weakness of love, or possess a divided affection, then, as a believer in the just God to whom we must all give account, I cannot proclaim

you man and wife. For me thus to proclaim, and for you to acquiesce, would constitute a sin against humanity and yourselves; against suffering earth and pitying Heaven, a most cruel and far-reaching sin, of which I cannot believe you would be guilty.

"Better no marriage, better the innocent death of one or both, than that you should be wedded by letter and not by spirit. Nothing but unutterable woe can ever come of such deception. Beware, then, what answers you make at this hour, for upon you as well as upon me there rests a responsibility which the angels of God have given into our charge."

The minister now offered a prayer full of holy fervency, petitioning High Heaven to grant strength, courage, and grace to those before him, that they might be able to speak with entire truthfulness, while pledging themselves to each other, trusting in the righteousness of God to shield them in truth's service, for truth's sake.

By this time, so affected were all persons present, that tears flowed freely from eyes both aged and youthful. Mr. and Mrs. Wordswell especially were deeply agitated.

Then came the question to the groom, spoken with an impressiveness so funereal that it seemed almost as though earth with all its trivial scenes had passed away.

"Edwin Longworth, wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love, honor, and cherish her, through health and sickness, through fortune and misfortune, or through whatever experience may betide, and wilt thou now and here solemnly, heartily, and conscientiously affirm in the presence of Almighty God and these witnesses, that your affection is in no way improperly divided or reserved?"

The groom, white as death, looked steadily downward and was speechless.

After an embarrassing pause the clergyman continued in the same carefully measured, deliberate tones:

"Ozelia Wordswell, wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony, and forsaking every other, as long as you both shall live, wilt thou love, honor, and cherish him through all the joys and sorrows, fortunes and misfortunes, which a wise Providence may visit upon you? And wilt thou now and here affirm in the presence of both heavenly and earthly witnesses, that the affection you owe to this man is shared by no one else, and wilt thou ask the recording angel thus to write your answer on the page of eternal truth?"

"I cannot!" exclaimed the lady. "May God have mercy on me, but my entire love has been given to another."

"Noble and courageous woman!" responded the clergyman. Then turning to the company, he added, "My good friends, you will now see the propriety of my announcing that the services we came here to perform are indefinitely postponed."

"Why had you not told me that you loved another," inquired Edwin, whispering to Ozelia.

"O Edwin! Can you ever forgive me? I was afraid of the effect my confession would have upon you."

"And because I felt sure it would be the death of you," answered Edwin, "I feared to inform you that, in the last few weeks, my own foolish heart has been captivated by a lady from New York."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ozelia. "I am quite indignant at myself for having been so silly as to suppose that you cared

anything for me. I am glad, however, for your sake, as well as my own, that you are so easily reconciled to the fact of my not wanting you."

"And, to tell the truth," said Edwin, "I am equally angry at my own folly for ever having believed that it was impossible for you to be devoted to any one but myself."

"We have both done wrong," answered Ozelia, "and now let us both do right by promising to be as we once were,—simply friends."

"An excellent suggestion," replied Edwin, "although I am afraid you will never consent to go nutting with me again, especially if we must come through a deserted picnic-ground where there are spiders."

Ozelia blushed as she turned away, but meeting the clergyman, thus addressed him:

"Your marriage ceremony, sir, appears to be strikingly original. Do you always make it so exceedingly affecting?"

"No, Miss Wordswell, I do not."

"How, then, did you happen to make our case such a notable exception?"

"I will explain," answered the clergyman. "Just before we were ready to begin the service, a gentleman called me to the door, and begged me not to consummate the proposed nuptials without fully satisfying myself that the affection between the contracting parties was all that could be desired. When I insisted on his giving me a reason for his strange caution, he assured me that his own adopted son was devotedly loved by the bride."

"There must be some mistake!" exclaimed Ozelia. "Can you give me the name of your visitor."

"Here is his card."

The lady took it, and read aloud:

"August Berkeley.

"Adopted father of '*Pete*,' otherwise known as '*Pelegon*,' but whose real name is *Charles Leslie*, he being the son of the late much-beloved school-master."

Ozelia responded with a blush and a smile, other language being prevented by a sense of overwhelming joy.

"Has n't this affair terminated grandly?" said Edwin Longworth, approaching his cousin Henry. "Ozelia will soon be married to her own Charles, while I shall be supremely happy with my dear Ella."

"To whom do you refer?" inquired Henry, assuming an innocent air.

"Miss Ella Marshall. None other than the New York belle whom I was telling you about this morning."

"Yes, yes. I remember," replied Henry. "But there is one little item which you appear to have overlooked."

"What is that?"

"Ella Marshall is engaged."

"Engaged! Engaged, did you say?"

"Yes."

"To whom?"

"To myself."

"Henry, are you deceiving me?"

"Certainly not. The lady and I have been engaged for a year, and will be married next Thursday."

"And I am the biggest idiot in the world," answered Edwin, with dejected countenance, "or I should have known it by the description you gave of her this morning. You could have numbered every hair in the girl's head. I wish I was dead and buried! Look at Ozelia. Is n't she lovely at this moment? It's just my miserable luck. I could cry like a coward. Upon my soul, I believe I am fated to have no wife at all."

"Which, quite likely, is a very proper fate," responded Henry. "Fickle men who allow their temporary emotions and suddenly-born impulses to control all their actions, would make very uncertain husbands, and therefore should remain single."

"Tell me," said Ozelia, grasping my hand in hers, "what do you mean by calling yourself the adopted father of 'Pete'?"

"O," said I, "that is what we named him when he was brought to our house in New York. We kept him about a year, when he was stolen from us."

"How do you know he is the same person?"

"I have been corresponding with my agent in Denver. He has seen Huntgill, who confesses that he left Mr. Leslie's child with the editor of the *Farmer's Guide*, who, at that time—as Huntgill learned from a rival newspaper—was keeping a Little Wanderers' Home. It is a long story, my dear, and when you come to be my adopted daughter-in-law I will tell it to you."

Only a few weeks intervened when Charles Leslie and Ozelia Wordswell presented themselves before Rev. Paul Murray, and responded most heartily to the same questions he had put on that ever-memorable night that the wedding so happily failed.

The bridal pair accompanied me to New York, and when I introduced our long-lost "Pete" to Augusta, she divided her kisses between him and me, while I divided mine between her and Ozelia; and it was the happiest moment of my life.

THE END.

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